The Lycian upland during the Iron Age

One of the most dramatic tales Herodotus tells in his *Histories* about the Persian conquest of western Anatolia during the middle of the sixth century BCE concerns the annexation of Lycia [**FIG 1**]. After conquering Lydia and Caria, Cyrus's Median general, Harpagus, continued south to Lycia. Herodotus tells us that Harpagus engaged the Lycians in battle in the Xanthos plain, and that although the Lycian fighters were courageous, they were badly outnumbered, and had to retreat to the city of Xanthos. Once back in the city, the warriors gathered their families into the acropolis, the highest point of the settlement, and set the acropolis on fire. Swearing oaths to one another, the men then rushed from the conflagration to challenge the enemy. None survived. Herodotus observes that by his time of writing, over a century later, of the residents of Xanthos who claimed to be Lycian, almost all of them were of foreign descent. He notes that only eighty families could lay claim to be truly Lycian, for eighty households were away from the city at the time of Harpagus's campaign, and thus survived the massacre and resettled the city.

[**FIG 2**] It is widely assumed that the eighty families were in the *yayla*, the summer pastureland that has a social and practical symbiosis with a lowland village. [**FIG 3]** This symbiosis exists today in Lycia between the major coastal towns of Antalya and Fethiye and the upland regions at the top of the Xanthos river valley system. [**FIG 4]** The Seki basin, the first one reached from Fethiye, has an altitude of 1250m above sea level. This and its neighbouring plateaux are nestled between high mountains that lead to the province of Burdur. Many of the summer residents live in Antalya or Fethiye during the winters, using the *yayla* as their holiday retreats from the heat, humidity and invading tourists of the coastal plain. This residential relationship between the coast and *yayla* is reflected in settlement names in both regions. For example, villages and quarters around Fethiye share common names with several small settlements in the Seki *yayla*: Patlangıç, a *mahalle* in Fethiye, has its mountainous counterpart at Yaylapatlangıç, while Kınık is both the modern name for Xanthos village and also the first village one reaches in the Seki basin from the coast. The pastoral origin of the *yayla*-coastal symbiosis may be seen in village names such as Çobanlar ('shepherds') and Çobanisa.

The Çaltılar Archaeological Project

[**FIG 5]** Çaltılar is one typical *yayla* village in the Seki plateau, with its own lowland equivalent at Çaltıözü in the Xanthos valley (Fethiye district). The village sits alongside the D350, which is the main road between Fethiye and Antalya across the mountains. This road has been a major transit route between the coast and the interior of the country for centuries. [**FIG 6**] An Ottoman bridge near the base of Oinoanda reflects one relatively modern crossing point over the river, and a Roman inscription here indicates that this was the crossing during the first century CE, as well. [**FIG 7**] Further north, closer to Söğüt, is a Hellenistic watch tower. [**FIG 8]** Finally, the recovery from the ancient settlement at Çaltılar of an obsidian blade originating from Nenezi Dağ in southern Cappadocia, c.460km away, of likely Bronze Age date, and the working of which is reminiscent of Aegean techniques, suggests that this *yayla* zone served as a conduit, as well as a consumer, between the interior zones of Anatolia and the Aegean for a considerable time.

Our interest in Çaltılar developed as a question about the role Lycia played in relation to Anatolia and the Mediterranean. Lycia sits at the corner between Anatolia, the Aegean and the wider Mediterranean at large. As such, it occupies a unique geographical setting between land and sea, for it is a crucial junction between long-distance sea voyages and shorter, more localised journeys, and it is the cornerstone of the landmass of Anatolia, where the mountains reach the sea.

[**FIG 9]** The project, which began in 2008 under the direction of Dr Nicoletta Momigliano (Bristol University), has been collaboration between Bristol and Liverpool Universities in the UK and Uludağ University in Bursa, and has been facilitated by the British Institute at Ankara. Research funding has been provided by the British Academy, Institute for Aegean Prehistory, AKMED, Richard Bradford McConnell Trust, Seven Pillars of Wisdom Trust, Three Counties Ancient History Society, our respective universities, and several private donors have supported the project financially, and Likya Şarapları kindly provided sponsorship in kind for fundraising purposes.

[**FIG 10]** Çaltılar höyük is situated just to the south of the modern village. The mound itself covers an area of about 30,000m^2. The area immediately around the site is very fertile and used for a diverse range of agricultural produce, including plum, apple, tomato, cucumber, corn, chickpea, and [**FIG 11]** wheat. The lush and fertile region may also be referred to indirectly in ancient literary sources. Homer tell us that the Lycian princes Sarpedon and Glaukos, who were allies of the Trojans during the Trojan War, owned fields and vineyards in the Xanthos valley and that this contributed to the source of their wealth; the assumed relationship between this *yayla* region and the Xanthos valley encourages us to muse that these lands up here may have also contributed to the agrarian wealth of the Lycian heroes. At this time, however, this upland zone may have been affiliated with a region known as Kabalia, although there is evidence of the movement of people between the upland and coastal regions on a regular basis during the first millennium BCE.

Fieldwork methodologies

We began with an assessment of the extent of the site itself. Judging by the nature and quantity of visible material in the fields immediately adjacent to the höyük, we observed a sudden drop-off in material to the east and west of the visible mound edges, where alluvium may mask the ancient extent of the site. To the north and south, however, the fields were rich in pottery. Much of the Iron Age material, especially that recovered from lower levels of the mound, appears very worn from water and erosion. This is in contrast to Chalcolithic/Bronze Age sherds from the same contexts, suggesting that the later material had been exposed for some time, perhaps washing down from upper levels. It also implies that occupation during the Iron Age may have been less extensive than in earlier periods.

We then conducted a topographic survey to map the shape of the höyük itself. [**FIG 12**] Using a total station, we gathered 3200 individual measurements. This survey revealed a series of cultivation terraces over the surface of the mound.

Geophysical survey reinforced our suspicion that the mound has been used for cultivation in the modern era. In the lower terraces, no sub-soil activity was detectable, suggesting that the fields have been ploughed. On top of the mound, we were able to see a series of east-west oriented former farming terraces.

[**FIG 13]** We also conducted an intensive survey, overlaying a grid system and doing a systematic total collection of all visible artefacts from a series of 5m by 5m squares. [**FIG 14]** In our first year alone, we collected, washed and processed over 14,000 sherds and recovered almost 400 other finds, including flint blades, querns, slag, and the occasional shotgun casing and donkey shoe. By the end of our 2009 season, those figures had swelled by an additional 18,700 sherds and 580 additional finds, bringing our total to around 33,000 sherds and 1000 other artefacts. The volume of material from any given square was largely determined by recent post-deposition activities, mostly ploughing, for areas that had been ploughed more recently had a higher proportion of sherds. Mole hills also assisted in the process of bringing material to the surface!

We have also conducted several other studies pertaining to the wider social and geographic area. [**FIG 15]** One is a study of the *spolia* – reused worked stone - found in the modern village. Many of these are Roman in date and are usually column drums, capitals, and other ornately carved panels, or cut blocks. They have been built into the threshold of public properties and private houses, where they sometimes additionally form part of the exterior façades. Several pieces were also found in fields to the south of the höyük itself. In addition, in 2009 a series of Tauber pollen traps were deployed on an altitudinal transect in the woodland above the village as a means of better interpreting extant ancient pollen data. [**FIG 16]** We also conducted an ethnographic investigation into traditional pottery production practices in the region today, which is evident in the nearby village of Esenköy. Here, women are responsible for the collection and processing of clay and the manufacture and firing of traditional pottery, which is wheel-made. Knowledge of these processes is transmitted through female kinship lines and remains particular to each village, such that if a woman moves to another village, perhaps through marriage, she is sworn to secrecy as to how her village of origin sources and processes their clays and produces their particular pots. Understanding such practices today may help us interpret the archaeological records to better recognise ancient methods and traditions. Finally, we have run community activities every summer, including an annual public presentation of our finds and results; an opportunity for the children in the village to participate in timed total collection survey using a mock grid and modern broken pottery scattered throughout; the chance to participate in artefact reconstruction using the modern pottery collected in the mock survey; and a series of small-group interviews to engage with the community's view of their local heritage and the project's activities. In 2011-2012, the project, in collaboration with the Fethiye Museum and Liverpool University on a successful European Union grant, was able to create a cultural centre in the village that focuses specifically on *yayla* culture.

Our results

[**FIG 17]** The earliest ceramic material found on the surface of the site may be assigned to the second half of fourth millennium BCE. This Late Chalcolithic material is all hand-made and chaff-tempered, often with a burnished surface. Some of our exampled find parallels to contemporary material from Beycesultan and Aphrodisias. There is also evidence of substantial occupation at times during the third millennium BCE, suggested by substantial number of diverse Early Bronze Age wares, including examples imported from other areas of western Turkey. We have also identified for the first time in this upland region evidence of Middle and Late Bronze Age occupation during the second millennium. [**FIG 18]** What we have is small in quantity and lacks sufficient diagnostic characteristics that could allow for more precise dating, but this evidence is nevertheless extremely important because archaeological remains of the second millennium in Lycia and elsewhere in southwest Turkey are relatively uncommon.

[**FIG 19]** The majority of our pottery dates to between the ninth and sixth centuries BCE. Some styles and shapes, especially concentric motifs and high-footed monochrome bases, compare to material elsewhere associated with the Greek Protogeometric period, which would indicate at least tenth century occupation. It is large and highly decorated vessels that characterise this Iron Age assemblage. At this stage, it is very difficult to say much about the majority of our material, for we have no stratified contexts from which to understand seriations and typologies, or how different spaces within the site were used. But it is clear that a number of these have been imported to the site from elsewhere in Anatolia, including [**FIG 20]** Phrygia (late eighth/early seventh centuries); several production centres in western Anatolia (eighth and seventh centuries) and the islands (seventh century), and Lydia (sixth century). Some material was also imported from Greece, including [**FIG 21]** Euboea (eighth century), Corinth (seventh century), and Athens (seventh/sixth centuries).

[**FIG 22]** We also have a notable collection of large, thickly-slipped vessels that find similarities to other eighth and seventh century western Anatolian outputs, known collectively as Southwest Anatolian Ware. Some have a distinctive thick white slip, while on others the slip is more pink, and we have a group of red slip with added white and black. Each of these is petrographically discrete, which suggests several production centres were exporting their wares to Çaltılar, or that the residents of Çaltılar were importing material from a number of different production centres in western and southwestern Anatolia.

Little material can be dated to after the middle of the sixth century. Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic wares together account for less than 1% of the total assemblage. Çaltılar's settlement history as suggested by the pottery therefore implies that occupation ceased during the middle of the sixth century. This coincides very neatly with the historical date of the Persian annexation of Lycia, described in dramatic detail in Herodotus's tale of the destruction of Xanthos. In a fanciful moment, one might even muse that this was the refuge site for the eighty families who were away from Xanthos when Harpagus laid siege to it. The largely seasonal nature of Çaltılar today did initially make us speculate whether the ancient site also served as a seasonal summer settlement in antiquity. Our results, however, suggest otherwise.

We were surprised by the sheer quantity of pottery collected from the surface alone, and their production origins – from as far as Phrygia and Lydia all the way to Greece – for a relatively small site on a modest upland plateau. Furthermore, we were struck by the large size and elaborate decoration of many of the vessels. We questioned, therefore, whether a community really would haul their imported, large and heavy pottery all the way from the coast for the summer season in their *yayla* village? The status value associated with imported pottery in general has further made us wonder if Çaltılar served a different function during the early first millennium BCE rather than just as a summer pastoral residence for coastal dwellers, as it is today.

To consider this further, we must return to our geophysical results. [**FIG 23**] The geophysical surveys conducted in 2008 and 2009 did suggest an area with anomalous features in the northern sector of the mound, which is the only area of the site where any significant anomalies were observed. This is due precisely to the way in which the surface of the mound has been ploughed, which has caused an accumulation of deep soil lynchets, or banks of earth that collect on the downslope of a field ploughed over a long period of time. At Çaltılar, the lynchets have built up on the southern slopes, which leaves the archaeology closest to the surface in the northern end of the mound. Therefore, the shadows seem to indicate something other than the modern field system clearly visible elsewhere on the mound.

To explore these features more substantially without excavating, [**FIG 24]** in 2010 we conducted an electrical tomography survey. This method allows vertical 'slices' through the subsoil stratigraphy to a depth of several metres. We took an intensive sequence of north-south profiles at one metre intervals. **[FIG 25]** In these the features were clearly visible from the surface of the mound down to a depth of 2.5 metres consistently across the whole area examined. These results suggest that there are the remains of a stone-built structure of 10m x 20m, and it is likely that the walls are preserved to at least 2.5 metres in height. There is, of course, nothing from these surveys to indicate the date of this structure, or its function, or even its construction technique, except to say that it is made of stone. Given that the pottery collected from the survey strongly suggests that occupation at the site ceased around the time of the Persian conquest, whatever these structures are, they are likely to predate the middle of the sixth century.

Stone buildings of such dimensions tend to be associated with the Late Iron Age, maybe even as early as the eighth century BCE, generally speaking, and are usually identified as a temple or a fortification. Old Smyrna is one such example. The Inner Defence Platform at Old Smyrna, for instance, seems to have been laid during the second half of the eighth century BCE. 'Inner Defence Platform' refers to a great fill of mostly river stones bedded in clay mortar. This was encompassed by a wall built of river stones to a substantial height, with a mudbrick superstructure. The excavators believed that it served as a modest fortress just inside the city during the eighth and seventh centuries to control access to the circuit wall and to the defences of the North East Gate. Although its name alludes to a military purpose, it may also be a contemporary temple, suggested by votive evidence pertaining to the platform feature. In addition, this part of the site developed subsequently into the principal cult-place of the city. Thus, it may have been both defensive and religious.

Conclusion

It may be that Çaltılar was something similar during its Iron Age occupational phases, although any further discussion about the precise nature of the site would be purely speculative. Nevertheless, our results have illuminated a number of features of modern Lycia's past. Although the area serves as a *yayla* today, our research suggests strongly that Çaltılar in antiquity was something much more substantial than a seasonal destination, and certainly well connected to other regions. This is very much the case for the Iron Age, given the large, ornately decorated, and high status pottery vessels from a variety of origins near and far, and that there is a substantial stone structure here with walls at least 2.5m high. Such a claim may also be made for at least the Early Bronze Age, given the quantity of imported material during this phase of occupation and its extent along the lower terraces. Collectively, these results overturn general assumptions made by others about the modest role this region might have played in the past, although it does not exclude the possibility that it nevertheless maintained a symbiotic relationship of some sort with the coastal settlements. Perhaps the eighty families who were away from Xanthos when Harpagus laid siege were in this area, although whether it was explicitly to seek refuge in a sanctuary or fortified site or for some other reason we can only muse upon fancifully. Nevertheless, our results indicate that the region itself in its pre-Graeco-Roman eras was something much more significant on the road through Turkey's southwestern land corner and that it played a major role in connecting the populations around the Mediterranean shores with the kingdoms of Anatolia.

Website: sace.liv.ac.uk/lycia/
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A substantial publication on our work at Çaltılar can be found in Anatolian Studies *61 (2011).*

Tamar Hodos is Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Bristol and was co-director of the Çaltılar Archaeological Project from its inception until 2012.

Figure Caption List

[image removed for copyright reasons]
Figure 1: Lycia


Figure 2: The Seki *yayla*


Figure 3: Çaltılar höyük in the plain

Figure 4: Map of Lycia with ancient and modern sites

[image removed for copyright reasons]

Figure 5: Satellite image of Çaltılar village and höyük

Figure 6: Ottoman bridge near Oinoanda

Figure 7: Hellenistic watch tower near Söğüt

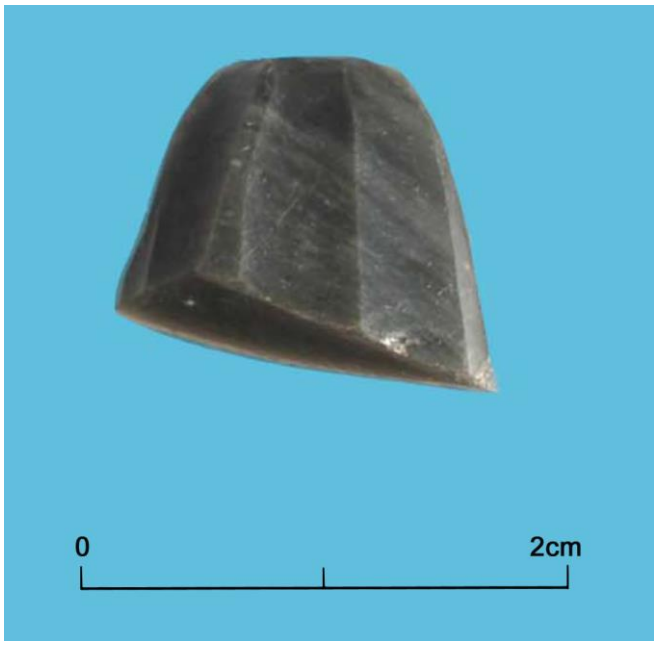

Figure 8: Obsidian blade recovered from Çaltılar höyük

Figure 9: Çaltılar höyük from the west

Figure 10: Çaltılar höyük from the southwest

Figure 11: Wheat drying

Figure 12: Topographic data collection

Figure 13: Intensive survey collection

Figure 14: Washing pottery

Figure 15: *Spolia* built into a home

Figure 16: Local pottery production practices today

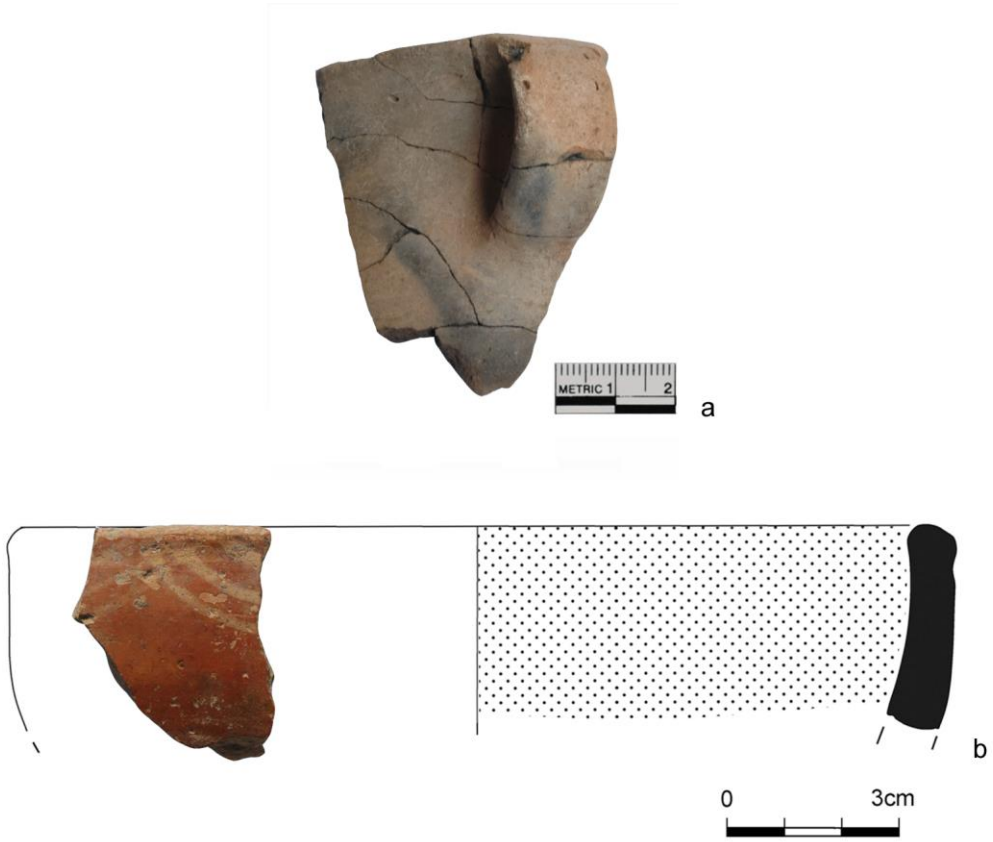

Figure 17: a. Late Chalcolithic pottery; b. Early Bronze Age pottery

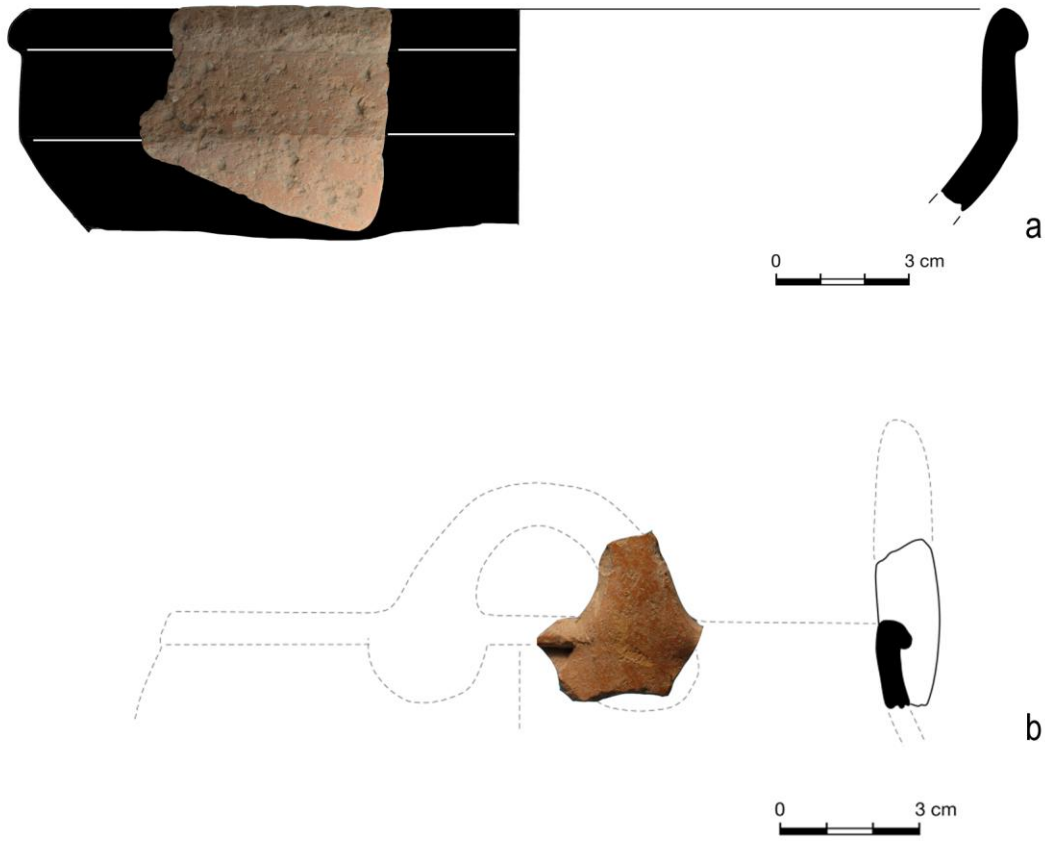

Figure 18: Middle to Late Bronze Age pottery (a. and b.)

Figure 19: Iron Age pottery

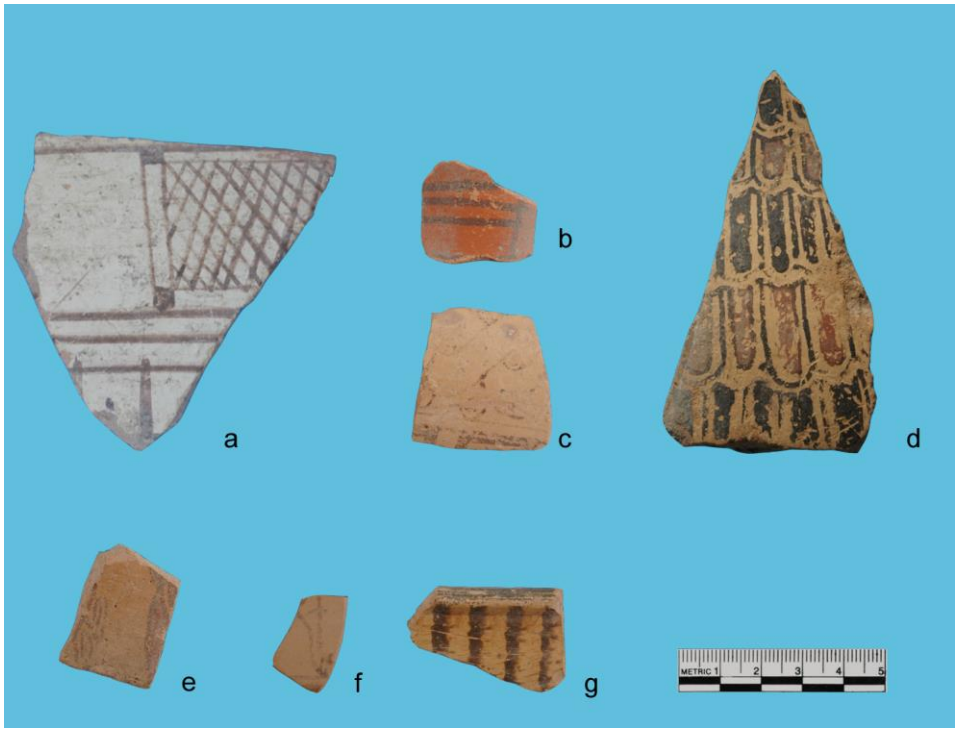

Figure 20: a: Phrygian pottery; b.-f. West Anatolian pottery; g; Lydian pottery

Figure 21: Greek pottery (a: from Euboea; b: from Corinth)

Figure 22: Southwest Anatolian Ware (a.-b. thick white slip; c. thick pink slip; d. red slip with added white and black)

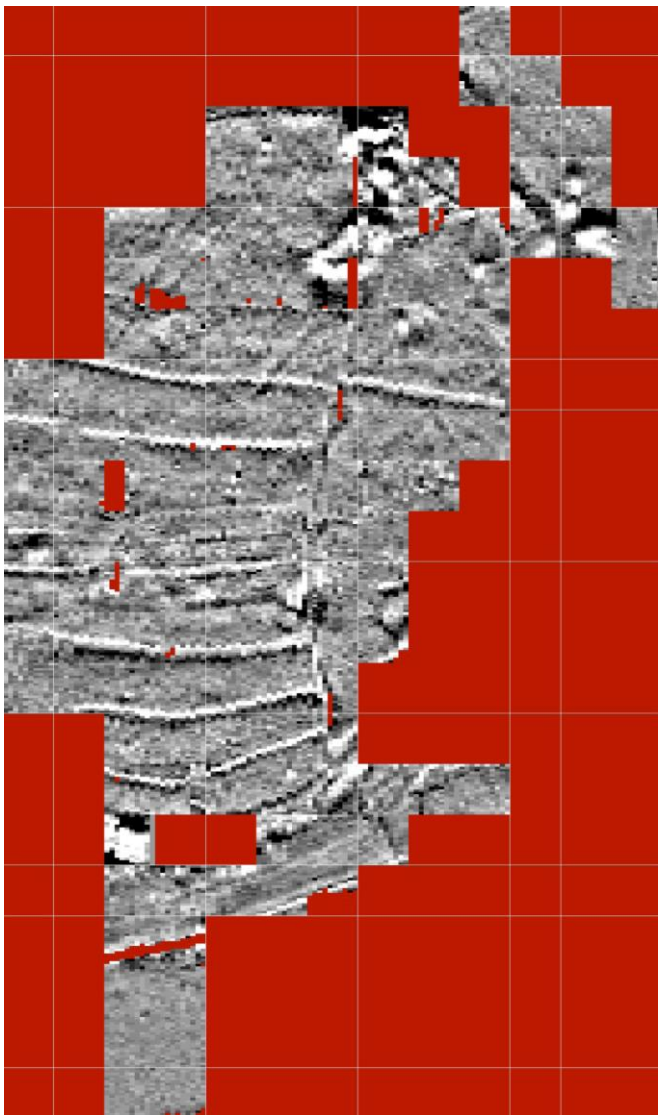

Figure 23: Geophysical results

Figure 24: Electrical tomography survey

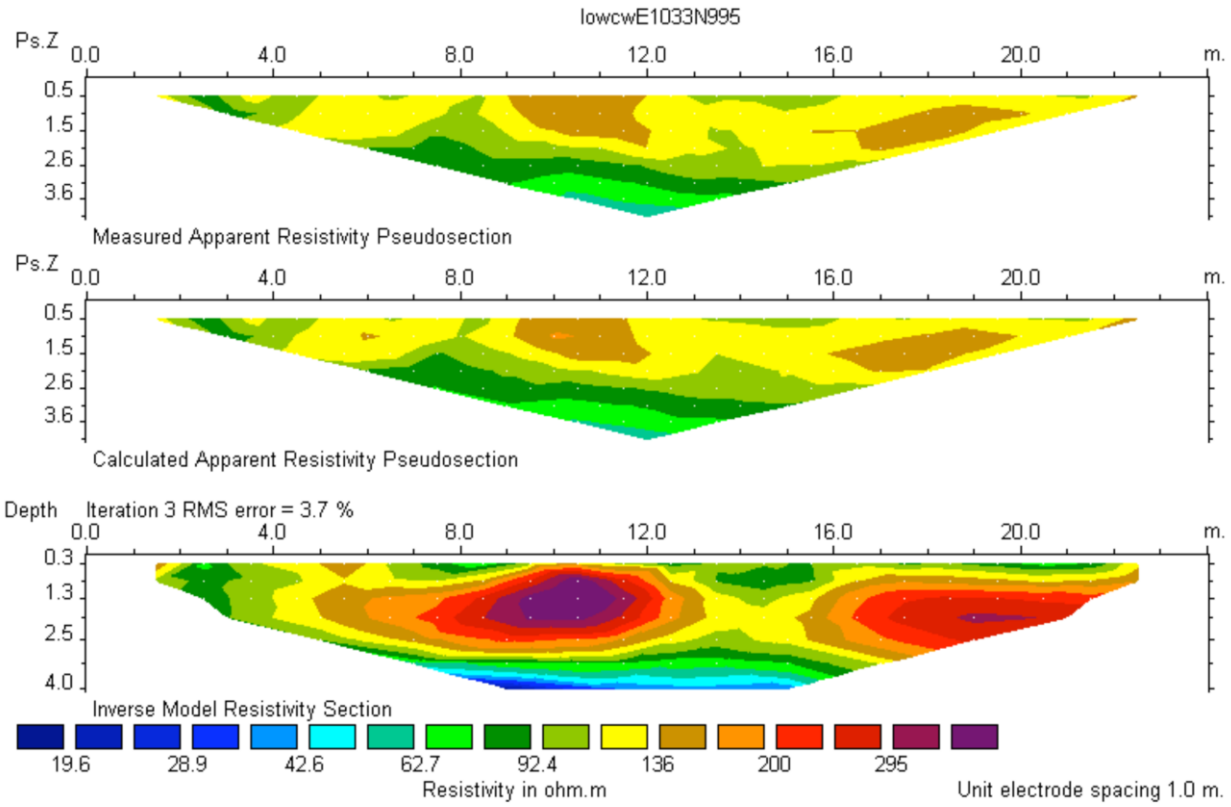

Figure 25: Electrical tomography results