

Institute collections and Ian Todd's Central Anatolian Survey

Geoffrey D. Summers | Fellow, British Institute at Ankara

The British Institute's registered collection of pottery sherds contains material from all periods collected from most areas of modern Turkey. There is also some comparative material from northern Mesopotamia and Bulgaria. This finite collection, made back in the days when the Turkish authorities issued survey permits that could span several *vilayets* and permitted academic institutions to retain study material (*etüdlük*), is a tremendous research resource. It is now splendidly curated in the new premises. A considerable portion of this collection was made by Ian A. Todd in the summers of 1964 to 1966. Todd's survey, more perhaps a reconnaissance than the kinds of intensive and multidisciplinary survey like that conducted by Roger Matthews in Paphlagonia, covered a huge area bounded by a line from Ankara to Yozgat, Kayseri, Niğde and Konya. It included the Tuz Gölü basin and the central reaches of the Kızılırmak river. Todd's first interest was the Neolithic, which was the subject of his 1967 doctoral thesis, and that led to a monograph published in 1980 (Todd, I.A. 1980: *The Prehistory of Central Anatolia 1: The Neolithic Period*, Gothenburg; see also 1998: 'Central Anatolian Survey' in R. Matthews (ed.), *Ancient Anatolia: Fifty Years' Work by the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara*, London: 17–26).

In the 1980s, at the instigation of David French, I began a study of the sherds collected by Todd, and occasionally others, from the *vilayets* of Kirşehir, Nevşehir and Niğde as they were before redrawing of the present boundaries. In this work I was aided by a team of illustrators who drew the sherds and Institute secretarial staff who typed a gazetteer of sites onto large floppy discs. The plan to publish a substantial monograph, which was well advanced, came to an abrupt halt with the retirement of David French as Director of the Institute. In 2017, having largely completed two monographs on Kerkenes that are now in press, I resurrected the project, but now as a BIAA online publication with Google Earth thumbnails of each site and copious photographs of the sherds to go side by side with the drawings. In this I have been greatly encouraged by Lutgarde Vandeput, the present BIAA Director, and Michele Massa, who has most kindly made his GIS database available and who will collaborate in the distribution maps and spatial analysis.

The first aim of this project is to make the collection available to scholars for further research. A subsidiary aim is to draw some broad conclusions concerning settlement patterns and distributions of classes of ceramics. There are, of course, considerable limitations that result from a focus on mounded sites visible from roads or marked on the 1:200,000 maps, geographic coverage largely restricted to the limited number of

roads suitable for a camper van in the early 1960s and various factors, such as ploughing, vegetation cover and site size, that influence what sherds were and were not found on the surface.



Iron Age sherd from a rhyton.

Nevertheless, it is proving possible to make some important observations and to draw some significant, if tentative, conclusions. It is surprising, perhaps, that our general knowledge of prehistoric ceramics within the area of the survey, from the Chalcolithic to the Late Iron Age, has improved very little since the 1960s. This reflects the small number of excavations that have taken place and the absence of definitive publications, with the exception of the Hittite period, of excavations now in progress. This situation will doubtless improve in the coming years as a result of ongoing excavations at a range of large sites too numerous to list here.

The most interesting results of the present study relate to the periods at the start and the end of the span, i.e. the Chalcolithic and the Late Iron Age/Hellenistic. With regard to the Chalcolithic there have been great advances in knowledge as a result of excavations at Tepecik Çiftlik and Kösk Pınar, Gelveri and Güvercinkayası as well as sites outside the survey area. At the other end of the time scale, in the Middle Iron Age there are distinct differences between the area of the Phrygian kingdom, dominated by grey wares, and the Lands of Tabal, where pattern-painted pottery dominates. Furthermore, it is now possible to document settlement patterns in both the Achaemenid period and the Hellenistic. On the one hand, a tradition of painted pottery continues unbroken from the Early Iron Age well into the Hellenistic while, on the other, it is possible to document developments through this long period.



Achaemenid polychrome sherd.