

## Original Study

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# Household Scales: What Cooking Pots Can Tell Us About Households in the Late Neolithic Stavroupoli (Northern Greece)

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**Abstract:** Remains of the houses in the Late Neolithic of Northern Greece are as a rule less well preserved than in some other regions of Greece such as Thessaly. The site of Stavroupoli-Thessaloniki is a settlement with a dense habitation pattern, but poorly preserved architecture. Several habitation phases have been distinguished, dating to the Middle and Late Neolithic. Radiocarbon dates place the earlier phase to 5890 B.C. or slightly later. As the domestic unit in Stavroupoli can barely be approached through their architecture, the ceramic wares and particularly the cooking vessels will be used as a proxy to identify households and clarify aspects of their organization. The size of domestic units is approached through capacity of cooking pots, assuming that sharing cooked food on everyday level is a vital element of these units. Also, variability in cooking techniques between houses and possible changes through time will be examined through both the shape and the size of cooking vessels. Finally, Stavroupoli's cooking pots will be compared with cooking vessels from other contemporaneous sites in order to approach the issue of household on a regional level.

**Keywords:** houses, household, cooking pots, Stavroupoli, North Greece, Middle Neolithic, Late Neolithic.

## 1 Introduction

The excavated sites dated to the Late Neolithic in Northern Greece have provided a great number of finds such as tools and pottery. However, in the case of the settlement of Stavroupoli the physical remains of the houses are quite poorly preserved, impeding our understanding of its spatial and social organization and the study of the basic social unit, often termed as, 'household'.

'Household' has been defined in various ways: as a group of people who shared a dwelling and different activities relating to the household (Blanton 1993); as a unit that shelters the individual or small social group from the wider village community, which cannot be economically and socially viable and therefore should collaborate on various levels and in various ways (Halstead 1999, 2006); a social entity not necessarily symmetrical to the house, but certainly "closely connected to the discourse projected from it" (Kotsakis 2014: 17), to mention just a few. Here we will use the term household defined as a domestic unit

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whose members share the commonest daily practices related to the production and the distribution of food, the central part of which is the preparation and the consumption of daily meals.

The act of sharing food on a daily level is an essential element of daily practices that contributes to the creation of strong psychological ties between individuals, thus forming a coherent group. Daily commensality brings a group of people together in the same place in both a physical and social sense, which involves various social meanings (Pollock 2012, Goffman 1963). Spending time at the same location with other people while eating the same food presupposes a chain of actions for its preparation, including labor investment for producing and procuring food. The habitual forms of daily meals can provide an insight into the everyday social norms of Neolithic people. The food was prepared by people who shared repetitive daily acts using their utensils and cooking facilities. They served the cooked food and shared the moments of eating with their family and relatives and/or friends and neighbors.

It therefore follows that the aspects of the social life of Neolithic domestic units and its scale can be examined through the analysis of pottery, which is the basic tool used for food preparation, serving, and eating. Furthermore, cooking vessels as containers used for the preparation of food can reveal information about the number of individuals that shared food cooked in the pots and thus an insight into the size of the domestic units that comprise the community (Urem-Kotsou 2011). Furthermore, cooking pots' shapes and sizes provide information on culinary practices that are also part of cultural and social dimensions of food, as will be discussed below.

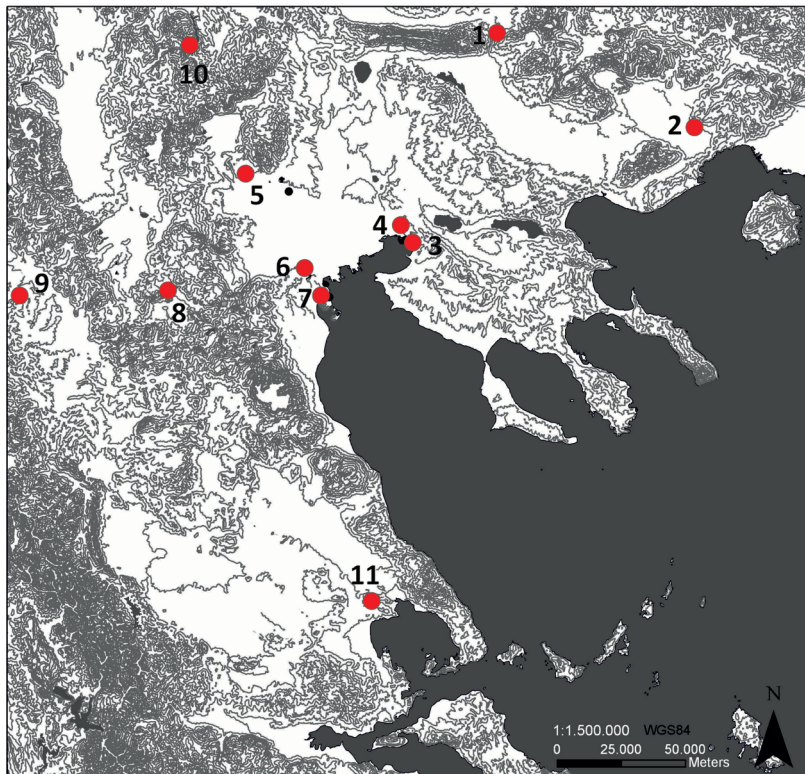
In addition, the size of the houses will be used as a mean to approach the size of the group that shared physical dwellings. Some aspects of social organization on the intra-community level will be further approached through the available evidence on indoor and outdoor cooking activities. To this end, the locations of cooking facilities such as hearths and ovens will be discussed. The visibility of daily cooking activities must have been of some importance for the obligation to share food. As mentioned above, the viability of the individual household was closely connected to the mutual assistance of labor and collaboration on various levels and in various ways (Halstead 2006). Sharing food resulting from the visibility of cooking might be helpful in this way. The aspects of the preparation of quotidian meals briefly described above will be explored in the Neolithic settlement of Stavroupoli, which will serve as a case study, but available evidence on cooking pots, houses and the use of space from several other settlements in North Greece will also be discussed.

## 2 Neolithic Settlements and Dwellings in Northern Greece

A close look at the fragmentary architectural remains that have been preserved in Late Neolithic settlements in northern Greece shows the co-existence of differing architectural forms. Pit dwellings and rectangular, above the ground post-framed, or wattle and daub houses, were the most common architectural forms which were preferred both in tell-sites and flat-extended sites. Pit dwellings were mostly built during the earlier phases of the Neolithic period in Northern Greece, while rectangular above the ground buildings prevail in the later phases. Nevertheless, both types of buildings co-occur in the area throughout the Neolithic. For example, Stavroupoli in the early Late Neolithic phase has rectangular houses built above the ground with wattle and daub (Figure 1), while contemporaneous Makriyalos I (Figure 1) had circular or oval shaped pit dwellings with a semi-subterranean part. There is also variability in intra-site organization of the settlements regarding the distribution of the houses and the use of space. Settlements with more or less densely packed houses are common, but examples of quite loosely scattered houses are also present (Kotsos and Urem-Kotsou 2006). A well-known example of the variations of architectural forms reflecting possible social variability in household organization of the Neolithic can be noticed in Sesklo A and B settlement (Figure 1). Sesklo A is a Middle Neolithic mound with free-standing houses, while Sesklo B is a contemporaneous flat extended site with smaller and clustered houses. This is a clear example of a combination of a flat extended and tell site in the Neolithic of Greece, pointing to “a dual pattern of organisation of a settlement” (Kotsakis 2006, 1999: 70).

The variability in the location of the cooking facilities in Late Neolithic settlements in Northern Greece points to differentiation of the local social organization. Although there is no firm evidence that

food was shared among neighbouring houses, it could be concluded that what was cooked may have been visible to others in the settlements where food preparation took place outdoors. During the Late Neolithic cooking facilities were found inside and outside the dwellings in both tell-sites such as Dikili Tash (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki, Treuil 2008), and flat-extended sites like Kleitos (Ziota et al. 1990), Makriyalos (Pappa 2008) and Stavroupoli (Grammenos, Kotsos 2002; Grammenos, Kotsos 2004). However, there are also tell-sites that show evidence only of indoor food preparation such as Mandalo (Pilali-Papasteriou, Papaefthimiou-Papanthimou 1989) and Polyplatano Imathias (Merousis, Stefani 1999) where the cooking facilities were found only in the interior of the post-framed houses (Kalogiropoulou 2014). Likewise, some contemporaneous flat-extended settlements must have had only indoor cooking facilities as the case of the Promachon-Topolnica settlement suggests (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki, Todorova et al. 2007) (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Map of Northern Greece showing the locations of sites mentioned in the text: 1. Promachon-Topolnica, 2. Dikili Tash, 3. Thermi, 4. Stavroupoli, 5. Mandalo, 6. Paliambela, 7. Makriyalos, 8. Kleitos, 9. Avgi Kastorias, 10. Polyplatano Imathias, 11. Sesklo.

Variations have also been noted among the Late Neolithic settlements in both the size of the houses and the organization of the space within the houses, a parameter possibly related to the size of the residing domestic units and the way in which they were organized. Usually, the pit dwellings were small, and they could accommodate just a few individuals while the rectangular above the ground houses were apparently larger and suitable for extended families or groups of individuals. There are settlements where the dominant form of dwelling was the pit-hut like Makriyalos I where the size of the pit-dwellings range from 2–3 m to 5 m diameter (Pappa 2008). At other sites such as Dikili Tash (Figure 1), the houses are larger, with one or two rooms, sometimes even three, covering an area of 45 m<sup>2</sup> (building 3) to 66 m<sup>2</sup> (building 4) and more (Darcque et al. 2007). These differences suggest that settlements in northern Greece vary to some degree regarding the organization of the households and the number of the household members. The size and capacity of cooking pots indicate that the size of the domestic unit in some settlements in northern Greece, which share daily meals cooked in ceramic vessels, might not have differed significantly.

Analysis of the sizes of cooking pottery from the Late Neolithic flat extended settlements of Stavroupoli and Makriyalos have revealed similar size ranges of the vessels, pointing to a similar number of people who shared the cooked food both in the pit dwellings of Makriyalos and the rectangular houses of Stavroupoli (Urem-Kotsou 2011). Despite these two sites having different types or size of domestic units, the number of people who might have shared the cooked food on a daily basis may have been similar. A somewhat different picture emerges when the context in which cooking pots were found is examined. Stavroupoli's cooking pots come from a residential area of the settlement and were found within or around the domestic units. At Makriyalos, on the contrary, a great number of cooking pots came from a large, public commensality context where people appear to have brought their own pots (Pit 214). The latter is inferred from the shapes and the sizes of cooking pots from this context that are identical to those found in domestic units (Urem-Kotsou, Kotsakis 2007). Therefore, while the ceramic and contextual evidence from Stavroupoli suggests that individuals were more possibly configured into households, that from Makriyalos indicates more emphasis on communitality, which is also indicated by other finds from this settlements (Kotsakis 2014 and the references therein).

### 3 The Neolithic Settlement of Stavroupoli

Stavroupoli is located in the western area of the modern city of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece (Figure 1). The settlement was established on a low natural hill and was flanked by two streams that formed its eastern and western boundary (Figure 2). It belongs to the extended type of sites characterized by the shifting habitation pattern, common in northern Greece. The total extent of the site reaches approximately 11.2 ha, but the excavations are still ongoing and some changes could be expected in the future. Nevertheless, the site was never inhabited on its total extent at the same period (Kotsos 2014). The change in the area of habitation, characteristic for the flat-extended type of sites, was not a result of gradual abandonment as part of habitation behavior, but rather an intentional change, where initially built spaces were later leveled to become open spaces. Three main chronological phases have been identified. The earliest (Stavroupoli Ia, Figure 2, Table 1) covered an area of 0.5–0.6 hectares and is dated from 5890 to 5640 BC according to C14 dates (Maniatis 2002). Between 5697 and 5531 BC a second nucleus was built 200 m northern of the initial settlement and according to new data must have covered a larger area (Figure 2, Table 1). The space between these two nuclei was not inhabited and only a few small pits were found in this area, which were probably used for storage. The next phase (Stavroupoli I, Figure 2, Table 1), which is the focus of this paper, dates to the early Late Neolithic period, according to ceramic typology. The settlement in this phase has certainly expanded occupying, at least partially, the area of the earlier settlement phases. However, its exact extent has not yet been determined. The last habitation phase (Stavroupoli II) dates to the end of the Late or to the Final Neolithic period (Kotsos 2014, Figure 2, Table 1).

**Table 1.** General information about Stavroupoli's stratigraphy and context.

STRATIGRAPHIC PHASES	DATING	SIZE OF SETTLEMENT	HOUSE/DWELLINGS
STAVROUPOLI II	End of Late Neolithic or Final Neolithic	Estimated size is 11.2 ha	Rectangular stone foundations, mud bricks for upper parts
STAVROUPOLI I	Early Late Neolithic	Covered partially the area of the earlier settlement phases. Uncertain exact extent	Rectangular, above the ground. Constructed of perishable organic materials (wattle and daub and mud bricks)
STAVROUPOLI Ia			
1st nucleus	5890 – 5640 BC	Over 0.5– 0.6 ha	Semi-subterranean, roughly circular plan, small to medium size (4x6m). Possibly built with wooden posts and branches or other perishable materials
2nd nucleus	5697 - 5531 BC	Possibly covered larger area	



**Figure 2.** The urban plan of Stavroupoli with the excavated plots and the three phases of the settlement – Stavroupoli Ia, Stavroupoli I and Stavroupoli II (see also Table 1).

### 3.1 The Dwellings

Despite the limited physical remains of the houses, differences in the form of the houses and the way they were built in the Middle and the Late Neolithic period must have existed. Although we cannot safely estimate the size of the houses, we can identify interior floor surfaces, in contrast to the cobbled open areas. These interior surfaces often have ovens or hearths.

The Middle Neolithic houses were semi-subterranean with a roughly circular plan, usually small to medium size (4 x 6 m) and possibly built with wooden posts and branches or other perishable materials (Figure 4, Table 1), as suggested by some post-holes found mostly along the outer edges of the pits. Exceptionally in one case, a post-hole was found in the center of a pit (at the plot of Doiranis 3, Figure 2) presumably for the post that supported the roof. This house might have differed in its form from the others (Grammenos, Kotsos 2004). The ovens and/or hearths were found both inside and outside of the houses. Next to the pit-houses, a smaller auxiliary pit of approximately 2 m in diameter was usually located a short distance from the house (Grammenos, Kotsos 2004, Kotsos 2014). It was most possibly used for storage or other ancillary purposes (Figure 3, Table 1). In two cases large pithoid vessels were found close to the house (Oreokastou 98 plot, Figure 2 and 3). Their lower part was buried in the soil leaving one third of the vessel visible (Grammenos, Kotsos 2004, Kotsos 2014). All these suggest that in the Middle Neolithic, much of the household activities were taking place outdoors including storing and processing of food.



Figure 3. Stavroupoli. The plot of Oreokastrou 98, Stavroupoli Ia (Grammenos, Kotsos 2004).



Figure 4. Stavroupoli. Pit dwelling of the phase Stavroupoli Ia (Kotsos 2014).

During the early Late Neolithic period, the settlement increased in size. The houses in this period were of rectangular shape and were built above the ground. They were constructed of perishable organic materials such as wood plastered with a thin layer of clay, indicated by the rare pieces of burnt clays with imprints of branches found in the layer dated to this period. The houses had also floors plastered with clay. Mud bricks must also have been sporadically used as a material for building the houses (Table 1). In some cases walls built with unfired mud bricks were preserved up to a height of 0.4 m (plot Dagkli 14, Figure 2). It has been suggested that the change in the construction techniques of the houses might be connected with the increasing size of the roofs and consequently of the houses (Tringham, Stevanović 1990). The ovens and hearths at Stavroupoli in this phase (Figure 5) were located both inside and outside the houses as in the previous period (Table 1). In some cases they are found only indoors, while in others it appears that the oven was outside and the hearth inside the house. Judging from the differences in the placement of the ovens and hearths in relation to the houses it must be inferred that some houses have cooked their meals both indoors and outdoors, while others mostly indoors. Ovens must have varied slightly regarding particular characteristics. Some of them were comprised of a low, upright cylinder with a large opening and a smaller opening at the base for adding fuel (Figure 5b). Others must have been domed with a small paved surface in front of the opening (Figure 5a, c) (Kotsos 2014). Storage took place within the houses into large pots and containers of a perishable nature, as well as in pits located inside or outside of the houses (Urem-Kotsou, *in press*, Grammenos, Kotsos 2004, Grammenos, Kotsos 2002). During this period a ditch was created, but it remains unknown whether it encircled the whole settlement or just a part of it. Around and between the houses were found cobbled surfaces of unknown dimensions, which must represent outdoor spaces like courtyards and/or roads. The early Late Neolithic settlement must have had at least five habitation horizons according to the poorly preserved remains of successive buildings (Kotsos 2014). The architectural remains, flimsy in nature and poorly preserved, do not provide much information on the size of the houses or on the organization of their internal space. They point, however, to buildings of restricted size.

The last chronological phase of the settlement, Stavroupoli II, almost entirely lacks architectural features. This phase has been identified, in almost all the plots excavated so far, mainly by the presence of pottery that is quite distinctive from the previous phases. It appears that the settlement has expanded in this phase and reached the peak of its size (Figure 2, Table 1). Judging from the very rare architectural remains there must have been some changes in the techniques used for the construction of the houses. One of the most striking differences to the previous phases is the use of stone for the foundation of the walls, while mud bricks were used more regularly in the construction of the upper parts of the walls of the rectangular houses (Kotsos 2014). A ditch must have also defined Stavroupoli II. It has been noted that in Stavroupoli during the Middle and early Late Neolithic phases the houses were not rebuilt at the same spot but have shifted to other parts of the settlement, as is the case in all flat extended type of sites. During these phases spaces that were designated as indoors were cleared up and replaced by open spaces and vice versa. For the last phase, Stavroupoli II, the evidence is as yet insufficient regarding the habitation pattern.

## 4 The Pottery

As mentioned in the introduction, the size and the form of cooking vessels have the potential to provide an insight into both the size of the group that shares meals prepared in cooking pots and their culinary practices. We argue that this could be a valuable proxy to approach the issues of the organization of Neolithic communities particularly in the case where physical remains of the houses are poorly preserved, such as the case of the early Late Neolithic settlement of Stavroupoli.

The size of the cooking vessels is related to the type of food that was cooked in them (e.g. liquid or solid, leafy vegetables or cereals), but most importantly it is also related to the quantity of food and thus to the number of people for whom the food is prepared (Urem-Kotsou, 2011). Cooking pots' capacity as a strong indicator of the size of the group that consumed meals cooked in ceramic vessels, might also be related to the contexts in which consumption took place (e.g. daily versus special events, Urem-Kotsou 2006). Large cooking vessels often imply consumption of food in large quantities and point to a greater number of people



a



b



c

**Figure 5.** Ovens from Stavroupoli. a, c) possibly domed ovens with small paved surface in front of the opening, b) oven comprised of low upright cylinder.

involved, as would be the case of particular communal events such as feasting, though this will depend on the type of feasting events (Urem-Kotsou, Kotsakis 2007, Lis 2008). Conversely, a house's ordinary cooking pot assemblage would reflect a more domestic scale of food preparation and consumption and thus the size of the group that shared cooked daily meals (Urem-Kotsou, Kotsakis 2007). Furthermore, cooking vessel shapes can give an insight into the techniques the Neolithic people used for cooking their food (Urem-Kotsou 2016).

Ongoing study of pottery from Stavroupoli shows that all the use categories of vessels commonly found in Late Neolithic settlements in Northern Greece have also been identified in Stavroupoli. The study also shows that several cooking techniques were used in the preparation of food during the Neolithic, but not in all phases, as will be briefly presented below.

**Table 2.** Size and capacities of restorable cooking vessels from Stavroupoli (Pot utility program was used for the below calculations, <http://www.arcane.uni-tuebingen.de>)

SHAPE DESCRIPTION	RIM DIAMETER	CARINATION DIAMETER	CAPACITY IN LITRES
Spherical open vessel (fig. 6a)	18		2,5
Hemispherical open vessel (fig. 6b)	16		2,3
Hemispherical open vessel (fig. 6c)	18		2,5
Hemispherical open vessel (fig. 6d)	16		2,2
Hemispherical open vessel	22		2,6
Conical open vessel	26		2,6
Hemispherical open vessel	22		2,8
Spherical open vessel		22	3,6
Spherical open vessel	18		5,3
Spherical closed vessel	18		6,1
Closed vessel likely spherical (fig. 7a)	29		8
Open vessel with converging walls	30	30,6	8

The discussion that follows is based on the pottery from two plots, Koromila and Gorgopotamou that are located in the area of the second nucleus (Figure 2). From these two trenches 26,000 pottery sherds have been examined. Of the total assemblage, 17% are cooking pots with a maximum of 3,160 vessels (although the real number is likely to be much smaller since joins between sherds are found). It should be noted that cooking pots comprise a small percentage of assemblages in general throughout Greece and only in the final phases of the Neolithic period do they reach 30–40% (Vitelli 1989; Perlès, Vitelli 1999).

Available evidence on pottery from other parts of the settlement will also be taken into consideration (Urem-Kotsou, Gioura 2004). In the area discussed here almost the whole chronological sequence is presented, but the early Late Neolithic prevails. The examined area includes a number of indoor and outdoor spaces. In some trenches parts of floors, postholes, hearths and other constructions were revealed, while in others open spaces were unearthed. In early Late Neolithic Stavroupoli a range of cooking pot shapes (Figure 8), and therefore of cooking techniques applied in the preparation of daily meals, has been identified. The majority of them are open-shaped spherical and hemispherical (Figure 6), while only a few of them are closed or whole-mouthed (Figure 7). These types of pots are suitable for boiling and stewing (Urem-Kotsou 2006). They are of small to medium size with average capacity of approximately three liters (Table 2). These vessels could have been used to cook food for a restricted number of people, more or less of "family" size. For example, in the case of a meal with a main dish being a soup, these vessels could contain ten portions for roughly ten adults as an average serving bowl can contain 300ml of soup (according to modern measurements, <https://www.cooked.com>). Also, in the open spherical and hemispherical cooking pots with an average capacity of 2.5 litres (Figure 6a-d), the quantity of a dish with legumes such as lentils

could include a maximum of ten servings for adults (0.2 litres is the recommended portion per adult), but the level of use alteration traces, such as remains of lipids on the interior walls, imply that the pots were not entirely full. Of course the amount of cooked food a pot can contain varies according to the type and ingredients of each dish and the quantity an individual consumes.

Apart from vessels suitable for boiling and stewing, a number of large shallow pans were also found at Stavroupoli I (Figure 9). The use of the large shallow pans is not entirely clear and this is the reason why their capacities were not calculated. They could have had a variety of uses including serving, but many of them have ‘sooting clouds’ on their exterior surfaces, indicating use over fire. Chemical analysis of organic residues on the pans from Stavroupoli I and Makriyalos did not identify any traces of animal fat, so it can be inferred that they were not used for the preparation of food rich in animal fat (Urem-Kotsou, Kotsakis, 2007). They also don’t show zones of dark color on internal walls that will be formed in the case of moist cooking (Urem-Kotsou 2006, in press). On some of them, however, patches of black or gray color are observed on internal walls that could be related to the use in the preparation of some kind of food without the presence of liquids such as baking and parching (Urem-Kotsou 2011; Lymperaki et al. 2015). Thus, according to the use-wear and chemical analysis, at least some pans might have been used for baking food of plant origin and/or parching, or for cooking of shellfish (Veropoulidou 2015). Similar vessels found at the Late Neolithic Vinča settlement in Serbia have been interpreted as pans possibly used for baking bread, according to ethnographical analogies (Vuković 2013). Finally, another type of cooking vessel found at Stavroupoli are shallow, open-shaped pots of small size. These vessels were obviously used for the preparation of different dishes to the large shallow pans, as they could hold just a small quantity of food (Figure 10).

The study of pottery also shows certain morphological differentiations through time, which points to changes in culinary practices. It appears that during the Stavroupoli Ia phase the only cooking technique used for the preparation of food in ceramic vessels was boiling. In the early Late Neolithic new techniques were introduced, judging from the form of the cooking pots. As presented above, new shapes such as large shallow pans suggest that baking in ceramic vessels might have been introduced, while parching, as an intermediate step, might have been applied in the preparation of different foodstuff such as nuts and various grains. Such a trend has been observed at other settlements in Northern Greece as well (Urem-Kotsou 2011, Urem-Kotsou 2016). Furthermore, toward the end of the early Late Neolithic at Stavroupoli, and particularly in the next Stavroupoli II phase, pans raised in number while cooking in deep vessels continued. The shape of the pans also changed from hemispherical in Stavroupoli I (Figure 9a-b) to conical in Stavroupoli II (Figure 9c-e).

The changes in variety and frequency of cooking pots’ shapes appears to be followed by the changes in overall frequency of cooking pots in the pottery assemblage at Stavroupoli. They are more numerous in the later phases than in the Middle Neolithic. A similar trend has already been observed in other parts of Greece where the production of cooking pots progressively increases from the Middle Neolithic onward to reach 30–40% of the pottery assemblages in the Late and Final Neolithic periods as already mentioned above (Vitelli 1989; Perles, Vitelli 1999).

## 5 Conclusion

According to the shapes and the sizes of the early Late Neolithic Stavroupoli cooking pots, there was a certain variety of dishes that comprised ordinary meals in that period, and in all of them the prepared food was of small to moderate quantity. Therefore, daily meals cooked in ceramic vessels must have been consumed by a rather limited number of people suggesting that the domestic units at the Late Neolithic Stavroupoli must have been of “family” size, comprising just a few individuals.

Cooking vessels from other contemporary Late Neolithic sites in Northern Greece, like Makriyalos, display a similar range of cooking pot capacity as the Stavroupoli ones, suggesting a similar size of domestic units sharing everyday meals. Although in Stavroupoli the average size of cooking pots is small, there are a few larger cooking pots with a capacity of eight liters (Table 2). These pots are similar in size to certain examples from the settlement of Dikili Tash (<http://www.dikili-tash.gr>). Cooking pots of larger capacities

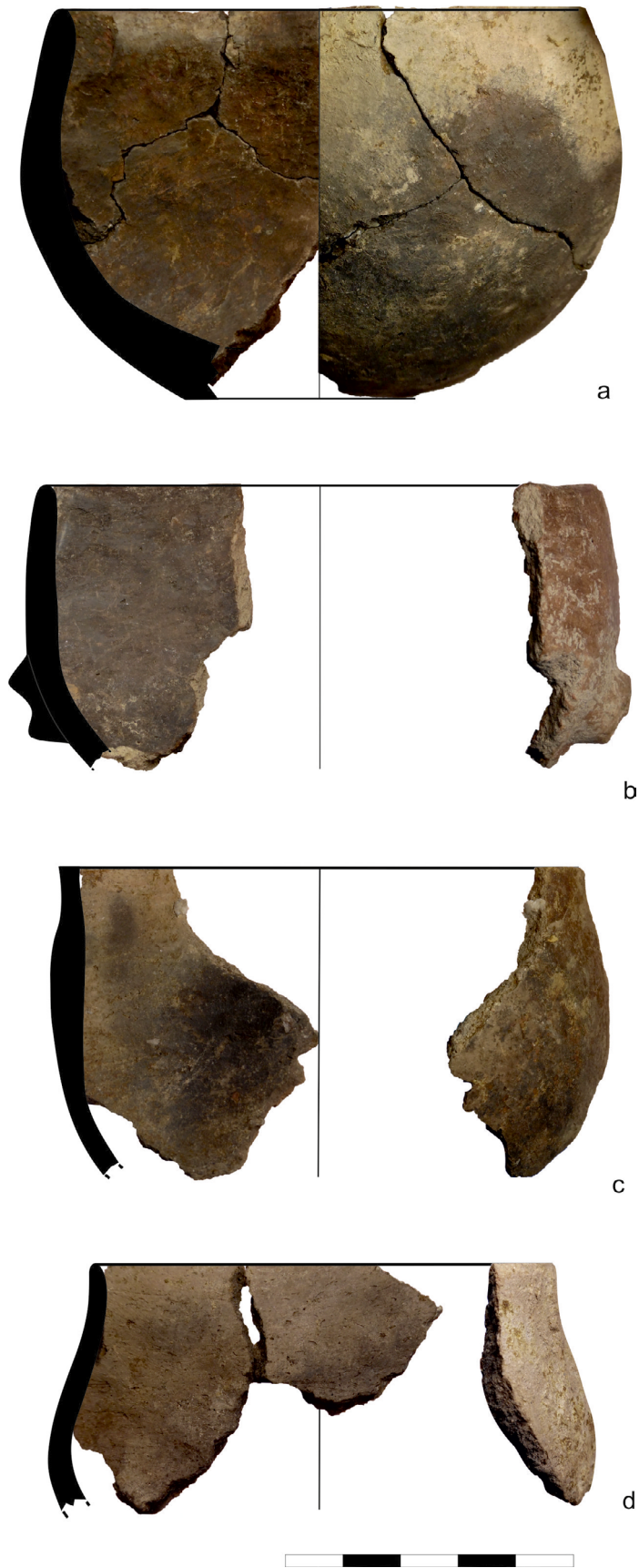


Figure 6. Open-shaped cooking pots from Stavroupoli: a) spherical vessel, b-d) hemispherical vessels.

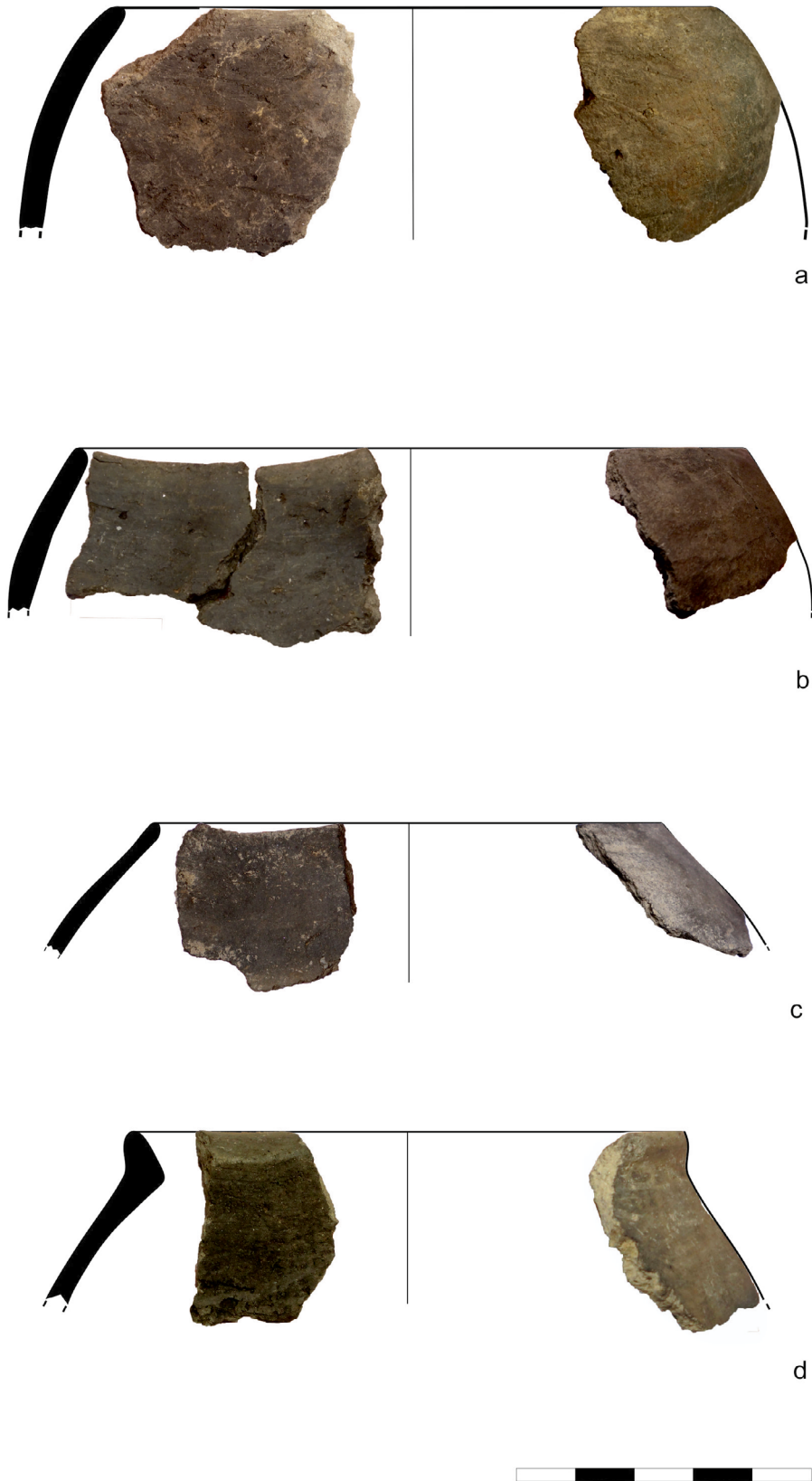
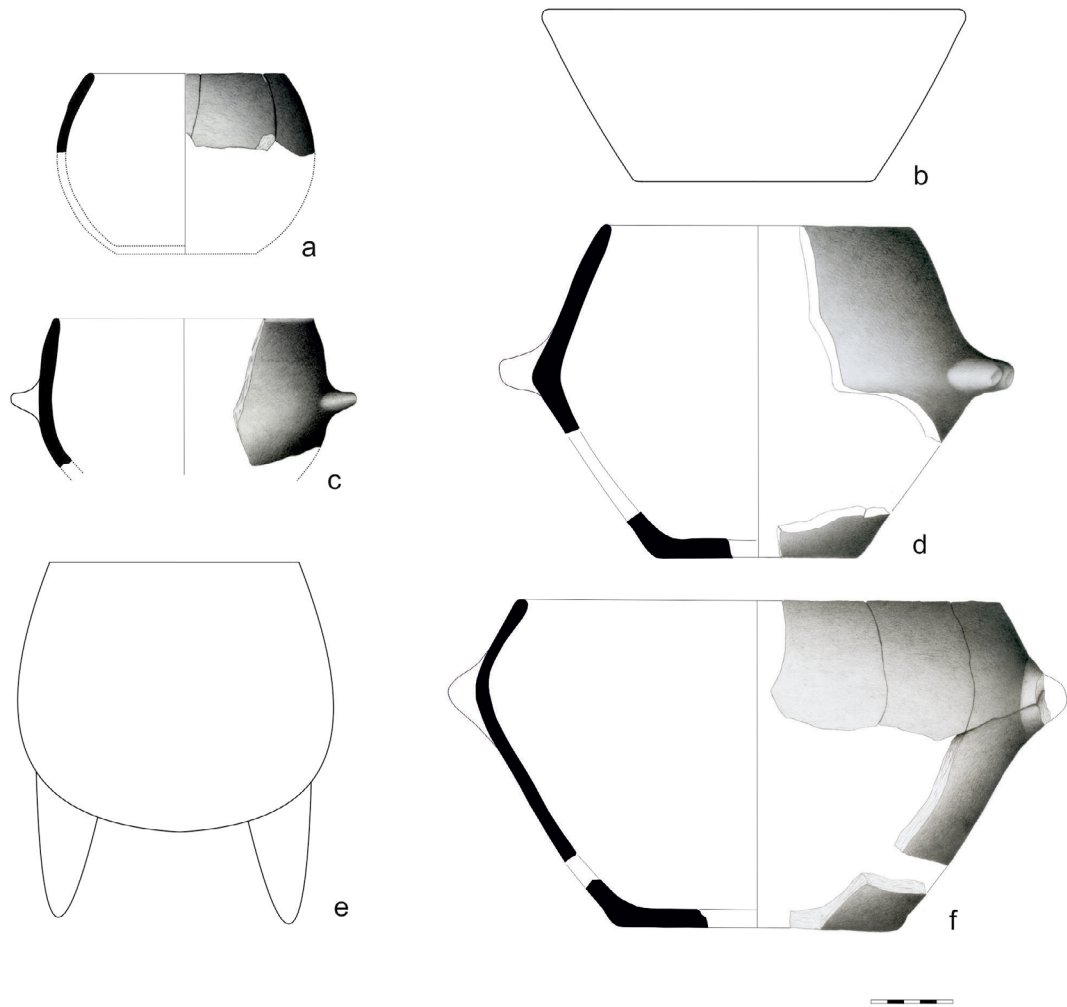


Figure 7. a-c) Hole-mouth cooking pots, d) closed cooking pot from Stavroupoli.



**Figure 8.** Different shapes and sizes of cooking pots from Stavroupoli: a) spherical vessel, b) conical vessel, c) hemispherical vessel, d and f) carinated vessels, e) tripod vessel (Urem-Kotsou 2011).

indicate the consumption of food by a larger group of people who shared the everyday meals, implying that some domestic units within the community were larger in terms of the individuals that comprised them. Alternatively, the rare occurrence of cooking pots of larger volume at Stavroupoli may be related to their use in particular events that also involved people from outside the household. It is interesting, however, that cooking pots in the case of Makriyalos large-scale feasting context were of ordinary domestic size. As stated above, at Makriyalos the evidence points to a greater emphasis on communality, while at Stavroupoli the individuals were more closely related to the household. These admittedly few examples perhaps suggest greater diversity in the organization of domestic units and the social life of the early Late Neolithic communities in this geographical area.

The available evidence on the distribution of cooking facilities in relation to the houses at Stavroupoli as well as in other Neolithic settlements in Northern Greece revealed a somewhat more complex picture. Certain settlements look less open to communication during the preparation of meals in comparison to the others. Also, such differences might have existed between the houses within the single settlement, as the example of Stavroupoli suggests. Here, some houses appear to have practiced indoor and outdoor cooking, while others preferred mainly indoor. Judging from Stavroupoli, it is also possible that several houses have shared some cooking facilities, like ovens, at least sometimes if not on a regular basis (Kotsos 2014), which would further reinforce the social interaction between these houses through the act of cooking. Therefore, it seems that cooking was one of the active means in the creation of relationships between the quite small groups of domestic units that formed the early Late Neolithic community at Stavroupoli.

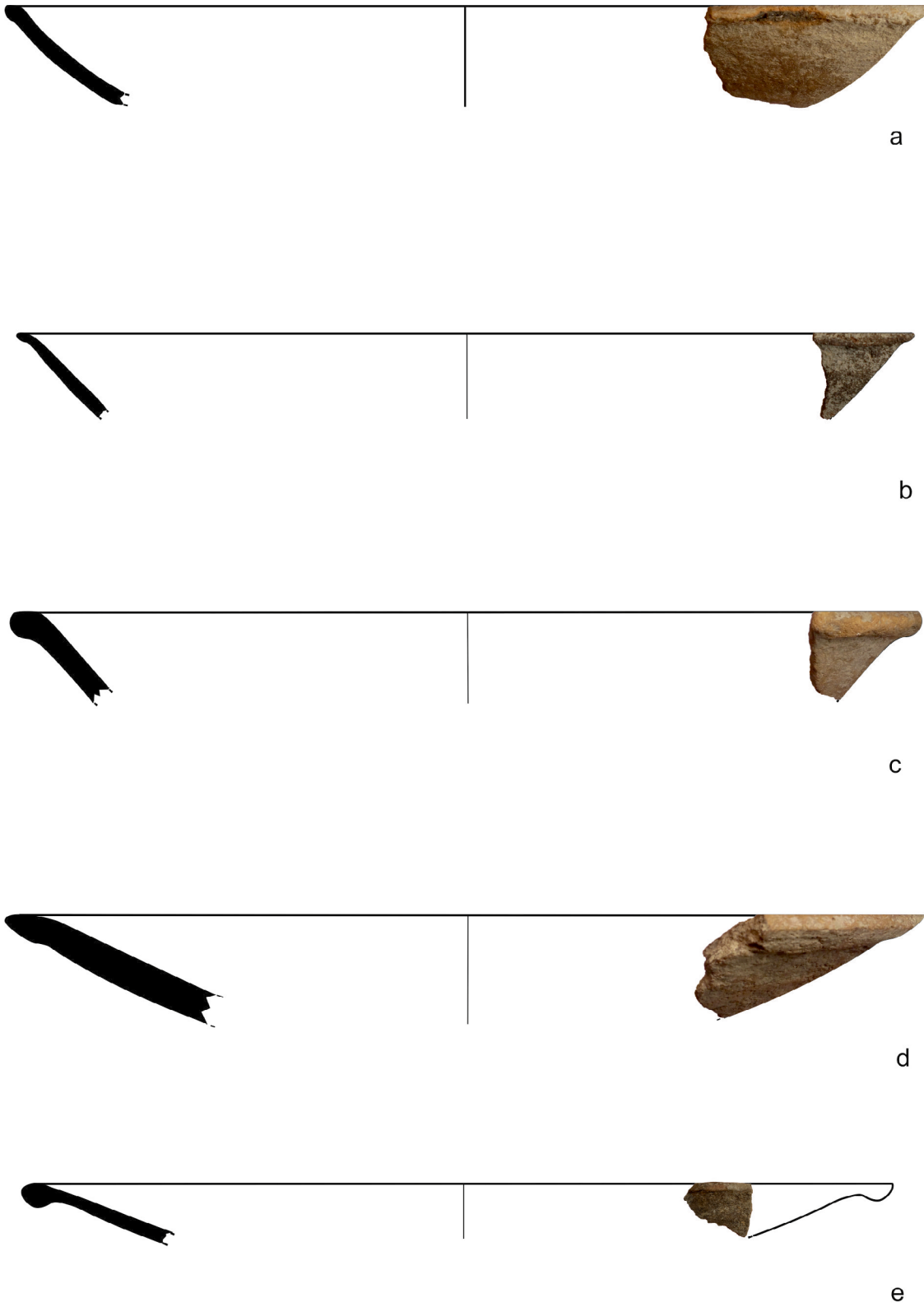


Figure 9. a-b) hemispherical pans, c-e) conical pans from Stavroupoli.

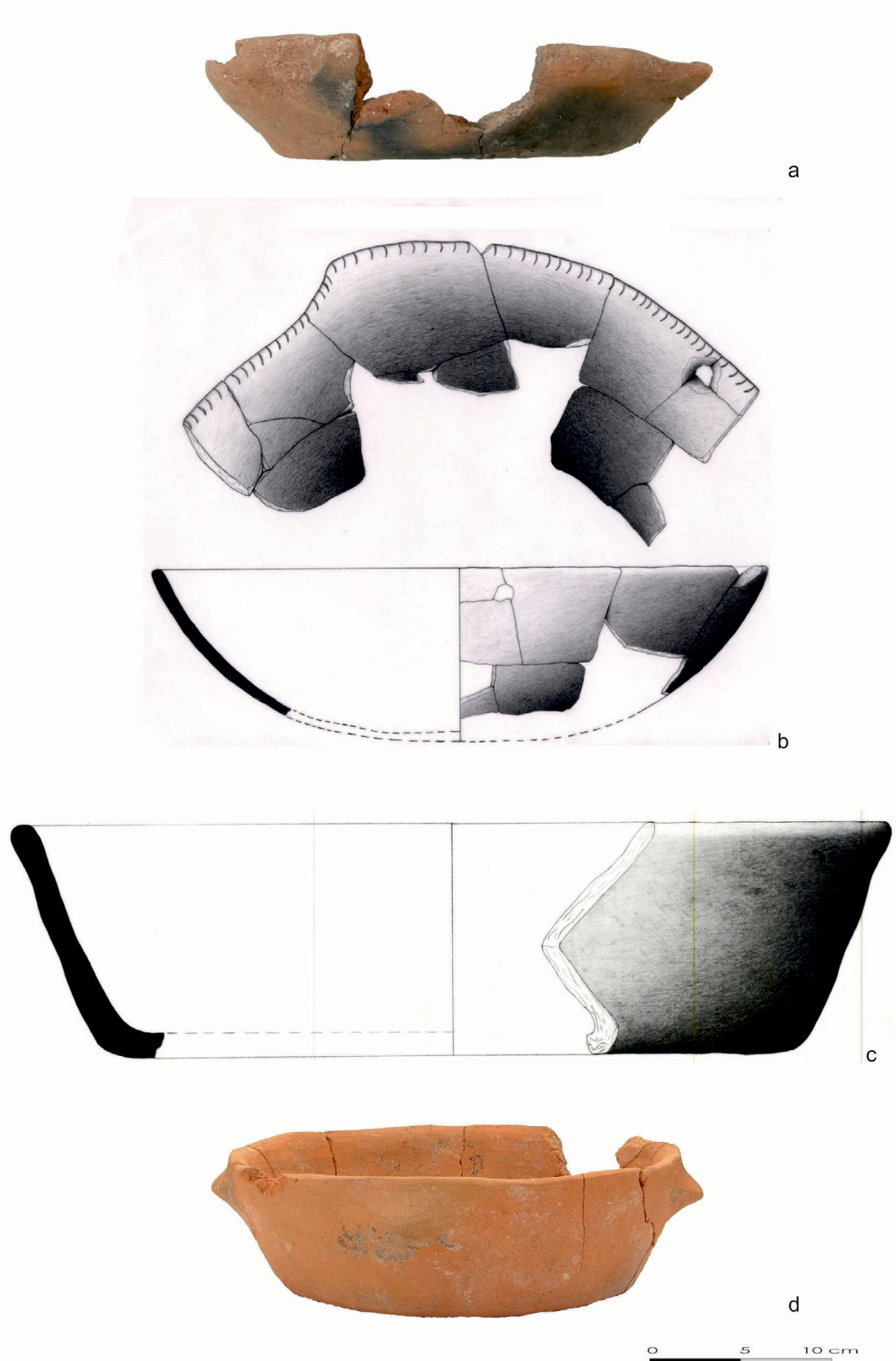


Figure 10. Shallow open-shaped pots of small size from Stavroupoli. (Lekanes. Urem-Kotsou, Gioura 2004).

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