

A New Iron Age Chamber Tomb near Çatak, South of Van Lake

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Abstract

*Our knowledge of the period preceding the Kingdom of Urartu, which was established in the mid-ninth century BC with Van as its centre, is quite limited. From Assyrian sources from the reign of Shalmaneser I on, we learn about communities living on the high plateaus of Eastern Anatolia. However, archaeological research in the region has provided little information. This period, known as “pre-Urartian” in the Lake Van basin, is evaluated here in the light of data from the Ernis, Karagündüz, Dilkaya, and Yoncatepe necropolises. Archaeological research in Lake Van basin indicates a tradition of chamber tombs. The latest example of an underground chamber tomb built of stones is the Çatak chamber tomb. The burials in the tomb bear anthropological features suggesting that the buried individuals belonged to the same family, and they provide new data on grave goods and burial practices. In addition, it can be argued that the social structure hypothesised in relation to burials to the north and east of the lake can also be applied to burials south of Lake Van.**

Keywords: Eastern Anatolia, Early Iron Age, Van, Chamber Tomb, Çatak, Urartian

Introduction

On 26 June 2012, a chamber tomb was discovered during roadworks on the Van-Çatak highway near the Değirmen locality of Akçabük village, 5 km from the town of Çatak in the province of Van (Fig. 1.a, b). The authorities at Van Museum were informed, and the next day a rescue excavation commenced to recover the tomb’s contents. The chamber tomb was located on a mountain slope beside the highway and built from local stones. Once it had been revealed by removing one of the covering stones, the tomb appeared to have been damaged by mudslides caused by run-off water and erosion of the mountain slope. Human skeletons, pottery and other burial finds were recovered from this mud layer (Fig. 2a). A number of pottery vessels, a bronze bracelet, a bronze ring and three beads were found in the chamber tomb and handed over to Van Museum. The human remains were sent to the anthropology department of Yüzüncü Yıl University, Van, for further investigation.¹ Before evaluating the Çatak chamber tomb and associated burial goods, a description of the pre-Urartian period in the region will permit a better understanding of the Çatak chamber tomb and its architecture, finds, and burial traditions.

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¹ Yılmaz *et al.* 2014.

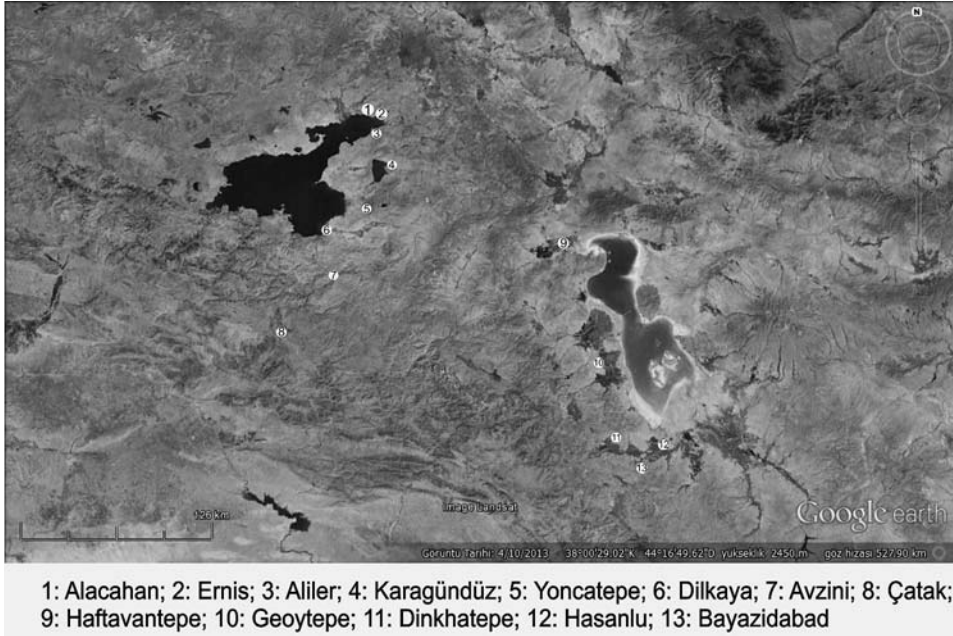


Fig. 1a. Van Lake and its environs major Early Iron Ages Necropolises and Settlements

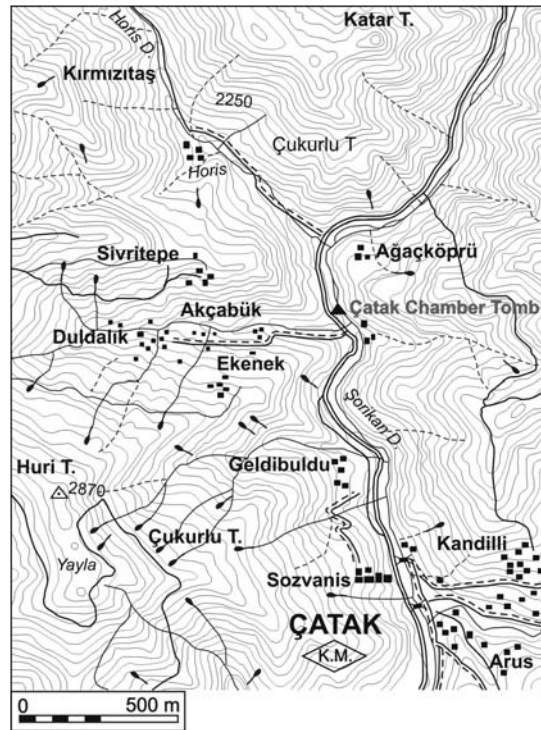


Fig. 1b. Çatak chamber tomb and topographical map of its surrounding



Fig. 2a. The burials and potteries found at chamber tomb



Fig. 2b. The dromos entrance to the east of chamber tomb

Pre-Urartian Period in the Lake Van Basin

Archaeological research in the Lake Van basin has focussed on the fortresses established in locations that dominated the plains in the period during which the Urartian Kingdom ruled the region. This period corresponds approximately to the second half of the ninth century BC to the end of the seventh century BC, and while it is labelled the Middle Iron Age in the region, it is subdivided into Early Iron Age / pre-Urartian and Late Iron Age / post-Urartian periods.² In summary, because the period of the Urartian Kingdom in the Iron Age can be defined precisely from both linguistic and archaeological data, it emerges as the main phenomenon used to define Iron Age chronology in the region. At the same time, archaeological evidence that allows us to identify the pre-Urartian period is poor. For this reason, the identification of the pre-Urartian period in the region has only been attempted through archaeological material from stratified settlements and necropolises in Elazığ-Malatya, Southern Caucasia and Northwest Iran.³

There are four excavated necropolises associated with the Early Iron Age in the Van region: Ernis, Dilkaya, Karagündüz, and Yoncatepe.⁴ While the north and east of the Lake Van basin, where these necropolises are located, are better investigated archaeologically, the mountainous southern part of the basin, in which the Çatak chamber tomb is located, is not well known. As a result of surveys conducted in and around Çatak, a large house⁵ and a chamber tomb,⁶ to its south, were found in the vicinity of Avzini. In this context, the Çatak chamber tomb, identified together with its *in situ* finds in the southern part of the Lake Van basin, takes on a new significance. In this article, first the Çatak chamber tomb and its finds will be evaluated. The tomb will then be compared to the chamber tombs and burial finds in necropolises identified through excavations, such as Yoncatepe, Karagündüz, Ernis, and Dilkaya. Thus it will be possible to identify whether the Çatak tomb has cultural properties that are similar to or different from necropolises associated with the pre-Urartian period. The question of which period the Çatak chamber tomb represents will also be addressed in the light of discussions on the chronology of the Iron Age in the region.

The Çatak Chamber Tomb

Architecture

The chamber tomb was discovered during the construction of the Van-Çatak highway and is a dromos-type chamber tomb oriented in the east–west direction. It was built in a pit dug into the ground, using unworked limestone and sandstone blocks that are mostly rectangular or

² Köroğlu-Konyar 2008, p. 125; Çevik 2008, p. 2; Khatchadourian 2011, pp. 474–476; Sagona 2012, pp. 254–255.

³ Çevik 2008.

⁴ Sevin 1987, pp. 36–43; 1996; 2005, pp. 358–362; Belli-Konyar 2003a, pp. 107–112; 2003b (Ernis); Çilingiroğlu 1991 (Dilkaya); Sevin-Kavaklı 1996a; 1996b, Sevin 2005, pp. 362–373; Sevin 2004, pp. 185–188 (Karagündüz); Belli-Konyar 2001; 2003a (Yoncatepe).

⁵ Tarhan and Sevin 1977, pp. 350–352, fig. 4.

⁶ Sevin 1987, p. 42, fig. 7.

square in shape. The entrance to the tomb is through the dromos in the east (Fig. 2/b).⁷ The side walls are built of stones, the dromos is 60 cm deep and close to a square in plan, with dimensions of 50–70 × 65 cm. It was covered with a stone, placed vertically. However, the precise plan of the dromos was not determined, since the dromos pit was not exposed. The chamber tomb is 30 cm lower than the dromos, and is accessed by a single step. Similar chamber tombs, accessed via steps, were also found in the necropolises of Ernis, Alacahan, Karagündüz, Yoncatepe and Dilkaya.⁸ With a rectangular plan that widens beyond the entrance, the chamber tomb is 1.1–1.6 m wide, 3.5–3.6 m long and 1.65 m high (Figs 3a, b; 4).

The side walls of the irregular-plan chamber were corbelled and the width of the ceiling was thus reduced by as much as 70 cm. The tomb was covered on top with three large stones, the longest of which was 1.90 m. On the north wall of the chamber and 75 cm above the floor, a stone shelf with dimensions of 0.35–0.55 × 2.20 m was found. This shelf consists of the parts of the four stone slabs in the north wall that protrude into the tomb chamber. This architectural design, with a stone shelf functioning as a *kline* or bench, is the most prominent feature of the tomb. It distinguishes it from other examples of chamber tombs found in the Lake Van basin, since stone benches (*seki*)—often seen in Urartian rock tombs—were not found in tomb chambers built of stone.⁹ With its *in situ* burial, and being the first of its kind, this phenomenon provides clues about the origin of benches that were found in rock tombs.

Two cavities with irregular triangular forms, located on the western wall of the chamber tomb, 1.3 m high and measuring 27 × 30 cm and 29 × 33 cm respectively, were used as niches (Fig. 5a). While there were no finds in the cavity to the south, a bowl was found *in situ* in the cavity to the north (Fig. 5b). The two niches are noteworthy. While at first glance they do not appear to be niches at all, they are identified as such by the *in situ* find, also seen in Early Iron Age and Urartian chamber tombs, although in the former they are rare. While niches were often constructed in the long side walls—as, for example, in the long southern wall in the Karagündüz KI tomb¹⁰—they were on the short walls of the tombs in Aliler 5 and Kaletepe II.¹¹ The *in situ* bowl found in one of the niches at the Çatak chamber tomb provides clues about the functions of these niches.¹²

⁷ During the road works, the access to the chamber tomb was gained via the top by removing one of the large cover stones rather than via the dromos.

⁸ Sevin 1987, pp. 40–41; 2005, p. 365; Sevin-Kavaklı 1996a, p. 15; Belli-Konyar 2001, p. 187; Çilingiroğlu 1991, p. 30.

⁹ Stone benches (*seki*) were used in many underground rock tombs as an interior feature of the Urartian tomb architecture: Ögün 1978, pp. 664–665; Sevin 1987, p. 46; Çevik 2000, pp. 9, 42–43; Çavuşoğlu-Biber 2005, pp. 17–28; Sevin 2012, p. 114. It has been stated that benches (*seki*) were not used in chamber tombs prior to the Urartian period (Sevin 2012, p. 124).

¹⁰ Sevin 2005, p. 365.

¹¹ Sevin 2005, pp. 374–375, fig. 16 (Aliler 5); Belli-Konyar 2003a, p. 82, Çiz. 60, fig. 45 (Kaletepe II).

¹² The niches built into chamber tombs are one of the prominent features of Urartian chamber tomb architecture (Sevin 2012, p. 114). There are niches into which urns were placed in the tombs associated with Urartians at Kamışlı, Tanıktepe and Aluntepe (Derin 1993, p. 104).



Fig. 3a. Local stone blocks used at chamber tomb and stone bench on the north wall



Fig. 3b. The view of the stone bench on the north wall of chamber tomb

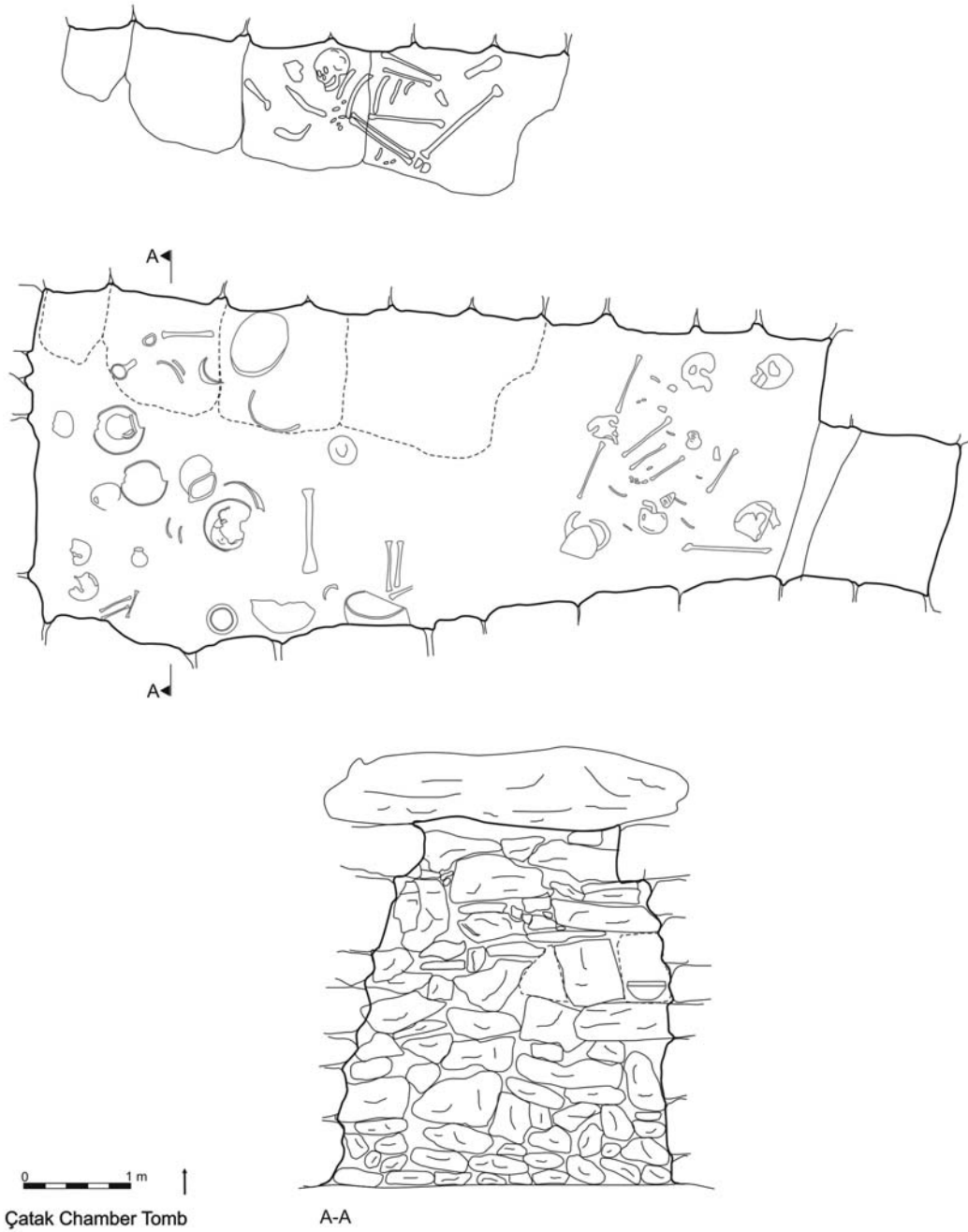


Fig. 4. The plan and cross sections of chamber tomb



Fig. 5a. Cavities in the west wall and used as niches



Fig. 5b. Wall cavity and in situ bowl found on it

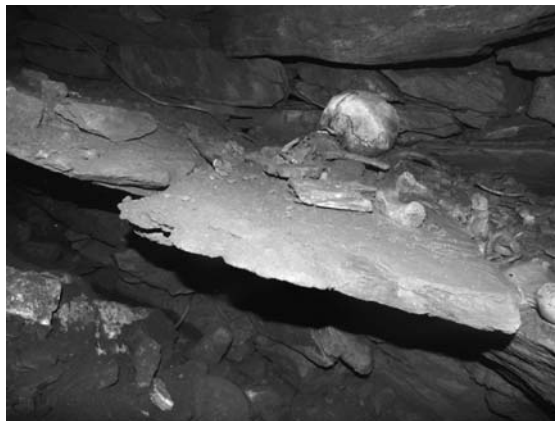


Fig. 5c. A burial layed on the stone bench

Burials

Remains of 18 individuals were recovered at the multiple-burial Çatak chamber tomb. Anthropological studies suggest that the remains belonged to nine males, seven females and two adolescents between the ages of 10 and 15.¹³ Physical similarities in the eye sockets of all of these individuals indicate they were related and the tomb was used as a family grave.¹⁴ As often seen in the Iron Age necropolises in the Lake Van basin, skeletons concentrated at the back of the chamber tomb were intermingled with the other finds. Due to the erosion caused by the location of the tomb, the burials were found in a mud layer on the floor; therefore, their original position could not be determined. The burial goods, consisting mostly of pottery, were mixed with the burials. However, one *in situ* skeleton was found lying in extended position on the stone shelf/*kline* (Fig. 5/c). It has been suggested that this could have been the last body to be buried in this tomb.¹⁵ If this is the case, the burial style at the Çatak chamber tomb seems quite different from the style usually seen in Iron Age chamber tombs in the Lake Van basin, where the bodies of individuals who died earlier were pushed to the back and the last body was left at the entrance of the tomb in hocker position.¹⁶ At Çatak, the later burial must have been placed on the shelf after an earlier burial was removed from it. Through continuous use, the chamber tomb became more functional in the burial activities. All the burials contained skeletons, and there were no traces of cremation.¹⁷ There was no evidence of foodstuffs in the bowls, as found in other Early Iron Age tombs in this region,¹⁸ because the skeletons and other finds were mixed together due to erosion. There were also no finds inside the bowl found *in situ* in the niche in the western wall of the tomb.

Pottery

A total of 72 pottery objects were found in the Çatak chamber tomb. When ware groups and form characteristics are considered, red-brown wares make up the majority (Figs 6–24; Table 1). The other ware groups include a small number of pink-buff-coloured wares (Figs 25–30) and a limited number of red slipped wares (Figs 31–32). The surface colours of self-slipped red-brown and pink-buff wares were generally mottled due to firing. These surface colours indicate that they were medium- or under-fired. While there are unburnished samples, the pottery is more often

¹³ Yılmaz *et al.* 2014, p. 1329.

¹⁴ Dr Hakan Yılmaz (Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Literature, Yüzüncü Yıl University, Van, Turkey) argues that epigenetic characteristics seen in the bones of individuals uncovered in the Çatak chamber tomb suggest the individuals may have been related. He points out that the form and position of lacrimal fossa in particular presents strong evidence for this argument.

¹⁵ We thank Assistant Prof. Ceyhan Suvari (Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Literature, Yüzüncü Yıl University, Van, Turkey) for examining the human remains and sharing his views.

¹⁶ Sevin and Kavaklı 1996a, p. 6; 1996b, pp. 23–24; Sevin 2012, p. 118.

¹⁷ While there were reports of no cremations in burials in K2, K6/7 and K4 chamber tombs in Karagündüz (Sevin 2005, pp. 363–364), it was mentioned that there were children cremated and buried in K8 chamber tomb.

¹⁸ Animal bones, found in bowls and described as a meal for the burials, have been discovered in the necropolises of Karagündüz and Yoncatepe (Sevin and Kavaklı 1996b, p. 25; Belli-Konyar 2001, pp. 194–195; Sevin 2012, p. 120).

lightly burnished. We came across red slip only in three bowls, where the slip was not applied to the entire vessel but instead can be observed in places on the surface.

Almost all the vessels recovered are complete, and bowls (48) form the great majority (Table 2). Sharp carination on the shoulders or bodies is the prominent feature of the bowls (Figs 7.3–5; 8.1–4; 9.1–4; 10.1–4; 11.2, 4; 12.1–5; 13.1–4; 25.1–4, 26.1–3; 27.1–3; 31.2–3). A small number have round or spherical bodies (Figs 6.1–5; 7.1–2; 11.1, 3). The bowls usually have simple rims, but there are also several with thickened or everted rims. The sharpness seen in the body is also evident inside the vessel, as well as on the rim. Grooves, handles and incised decorations are detail features of the bowls. The grooves appear on the rim (Fig. 13.3), in several rows on the exterior surface, usually between the rim and the shoulder carination (Figs 9.4; 13.1; 25.3), or, in one example, on the interior of the vessel (Fig. 25.4). The handles either contain no holes or they have horizontal string holes (Figs 7.3–4; 9.3–4; 13.1; 25.2–3; 26.2–3; 27.1, 3; 31.3). Incised decoration, seen only in two samples, consists of diagonal lines facing one another (Fig. 13.3), giving a triangular appearance (Fig. 26.1).

The remaining vessels consist of pots (19), jugs (4) and a vase. The pots form the second main group. They all have short necks and simple rims (Figs 15–22).¹⁹ The details on the pots include grooves on the interior,²⁰ or, in a few examples, the exterior (Fig. 18.2), and incised triangular decorations (Fig. 20.1–2). Apart from these features, the frequent use of handles is notable (Figs 17.1; 18.1; 20.1–4; 22.1–3). Incised decoration in the form of nested triangles appears between the neck and swollen body. A notch decoration on vertical handles also appears, running from the rim down to the body (Fig. 20.1–2). The majority of pots have an irregular form, indicating they were handmade (Figs 15–16).

Jugs make up the third group of ceramics uncovered from the Çatak chamber tomb, and consist of long-necked, short-necked and neckless shapes (Figs 23.1–3; 29.2). A neckless jug with a relatively large rim twisted lightly to form the pouring lip does quite not fit into this pottery type, which usually has a narrow neck and handles (Fig. 23.3). However, a “trefoil jug”, seen particularly in red burnished examples of the Middle Iron Age/Urartian Period and Eastern Anatolian Early Iron Age ceramic groups, was also found (Fig. 29.2). This jug, similar in form to those discovered in both Karagündüz and Ernis tombs,²¹ has an incised decoration on its body.

The final form seen at the Çatak chamber tomb is represented by a vase which constitutes the only example of its kind (Fig. 29.1). Distinguished from the jugs by the absence of handles, this vessel is notable for the sharp lines in the shape of its stepped long neck.

¹⁹ Similar forms, described as “S” profile, were commonly used in potteries of Ernis Necropolis (Sevin 1996, p. 442, fig. 4.1–9; 2005, p. 360, fig. 4.6–11).

²⁰ It has been stated that the grooves seen inside the rims are prominent features of pottery unearthed in Dilkaya Necropolis (Çilingiroğlu 1993, p. 476). This feature has also frequently been seen in the examples from Ernis Necropolis (Sevin 1996, p. 442, fig. 4.8–9, pl. 3.3).

²¹ Sevin 1999, p. 163, fig. 8.3–4.

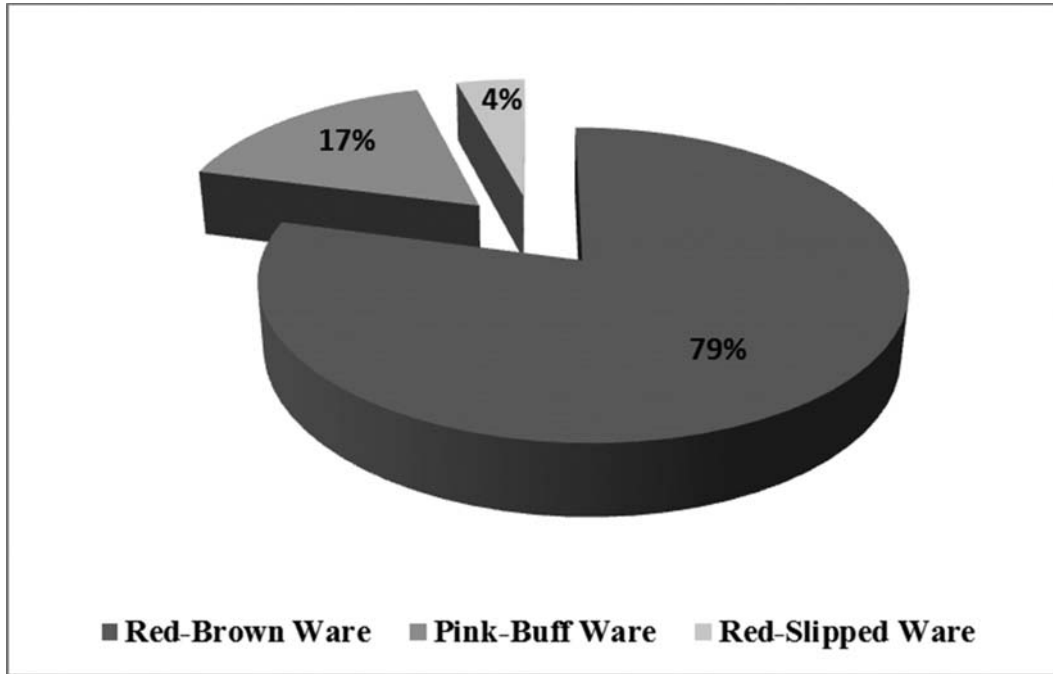


Table 1. Pottery ware groups distribution in the Çatak chamber tomb

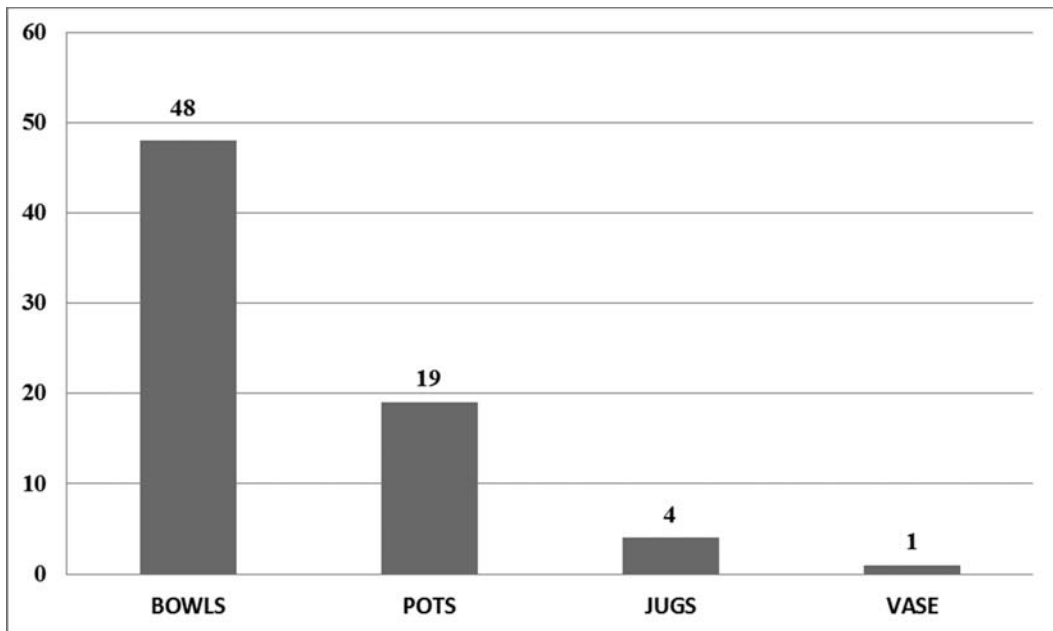


Table 2. Pottery shape distribution in the Çatak chamber tomb

Small finds

The small finds unearthed from the Çatak chamber tomb are few in number compared to the pottery. They include a bronze bracelet, a ring and three beads, and these collectively make up the burial goods for the burials (Fig. 33a–e). The open bracelet, round in shape, which has snake-heads on both ends, has a smooth interior, while its exterior is formed by ridges. The bronze ring, of a type seen in many chamber tombs dating to the Early Iron Age in Lake Van basin and at Urartian excavations, is simple and round, with ends that overlap each other. Of the three beads found during cleaning, one was agate and the other two were glass. On the body of the light-yellow-coloured glass bead were zigzag lines, probably made by applying a heated metal object with a pointed end. The black bead was given a different appearance by making incisions on its three sides. The holes going through all three beads appear very smooth. There were no objects made of iron amongst the burial goods placed in the tomb.²²

Metal analysis

The elemental composition of the two metal items found at the Çatak chamber tomb, determined by X-ray Fluorescence Spectrometry, is given in Table 3.

Item	Fe%	Ni%	Cu%	Zn%	Zr%	Mo%	Pd%	Ag%	Sn%	Sb%	Pt%	Au%	Pb%	Bi%
Bracelet	1,445	0,03	81,5	0,1	ND	0,02	ND	ND	8,993	0,2453	ND	ND	7,5128	ND
Bracelet	1,664	ND	75,8	0,14	ND	0,02	ND	ND	12,69	0,3101	ND	ND	9,1814	ND
Bracelet	1,448	0,03	78,2	0,33	ND	0,02	ND	ND	11,85	0,2756	ND	ND	7,7366	ND
Ring	1,481	ND	69,2	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	28,04	0,5599	ND	ND	0,7316	ND

ND: not detectable

Table 3. Elemental composition of the ring and the ridged bracelet found at the Çatak chamber tomb, as determined by X-ray Fluorescence Spectrometry

The analysis of the ridged bracelet suggested that it was made of an alloy of copper antimony, tin and lead (78.5%, 11.11% and 8.14% respectively).²³ Antimony-containing copper is frequently encountered in the analyses of Urartian artefacts. The level of 0.27% antimony detected at the Çatak chamber tomb is similar to that found in some Urartian bronzes recovered from Toprak-kale, Altıntepe and Patnos.²⁴ Likewise, the percentage of tin detected in the bracelet is similar to that seen in Urartian shields found in excavations at Ayanis fortress.²⁵

²² It has been reported that there were no gifts made of iron in tomb chambers identified as Group II in Ernis necropolis (Sevin 1987, p. 40).

²³ We thank Assistant Prof. Mahmut Aydın (Department of Archaeology, Batman University, Batman, Turkey) for analysing metal objects and sharing his views.

²⁴ Hughes *et al.*, 1981, pp. 141–145; As we were unable to conduct detailed analyses on metal objects, our comparative analysis was restricted to Urartian examples. See Nieling 2009, pp. 246–247 for analysis of limited metal objects uncovered in Karagündüz Necropolis.

²⁵ Ingo *et al.*, 2010, pp. 793–800.

The percentage of tin (Sn) was higher in the ring than in the bracelet. It appears that lead (Pb) was not used in the alloy. The percentages of antimony (Sb) and iron (Fe) indicate that the copper used in the manufacturing of the ring and the bracelet was probably sourced from the same raw material. The fact that lead was not detected in the ring suggests that the ring and the bracelet were cast from different metal ore. This indicates that the ring and the bracelet were not specifically made to place in the tomb, but instead, they were personal items of daily use before they were left there.

Discussion

Our knowledge of the political and cultural composition of the Lake Van basin prior to the Urartian Kingdom comes from Assyrian texts. From these sources, it appears that the geographic region, known as Uruadri in earlier periods and later as Nairi, was inhabited by semi-nomadic tribes and no political-military unity existed. Unfortunately, the archaeological evidence associated with this period, characterised by semi-nomadic and tribal lifestyles in the Lake Van basin, is inadequate. Excavations and surveys have been conducted in the basin with the aim of illuminating the period preceding the Urartian era. The finds, especially in the necropolises of Ernis, Karagündüz, Dilkaya and Yoncatepe, have led to a significant increase in our knowledge of tomb architecture and burial traditions. At this point, the Çatak chamber tomb, which differs from the Urartian-period examples in terms of its contents, can play an important part in chronological discussions by reference to its architecture and the objects it contains.

Tribal necropolises consisting of chamber tombs, identified in both surveys and archaeological excavations in the region, and some citadels reported to be associated with them, are considered to be the most significant archaeological clues to identifying the Early Iron Age in the region.²⁶ Sevin, who evaluated the relationships between the pre-Urartian period and the Urartian culture through the burial architecture of the necropolis areas in the Lake Van basin and through the typological distinctions between burial finds, established that the Early Iron Age consisted of two distinct periods. He concluded that burials without pink-buff-coloured and incised pottery, iron jewellery and ceremonial weapons, and finally, tombs without dromoi, represented the first phase of the Early Iron Age. In the later, second phase, chamber tombs were planned with a dromos and iron continued to be used, but the number of bronze finds also increased. Also among grave goods, lustrous red burnished pottery—the precursor of the palace wares typical of the Urartian Kingdom—emerged in tombs in the north and east of the Lake Van basin.²⁷

Other scholars are sceptical of the archaeological material from necropolises that are considered to represent the pre-Urartian period in the region—such as Ernis, Karagündüz, Yoncatepe, and Dilkaya—and view these places as the products of a provincial culture associated with the Urartian Kingdom.²⁸ Köroğlu and Konyar argue that the idea that the finds from the necropolises belong to the pre-Urartian period should be approached with doubt, and that the burial finds,

²⁶ Sevin 2004; 2005.

²⁷ Sevin 1999.

²⁸ Köroğlu-Konyar 2008, p. 125. O. W. Muscarella (2006, p. 171) also states that the burials and finds from the Karagündüz necropolis, which are dated to the Early Iron Age by V. Sevin, belong to the Urartian period.

including pottery, belong to communities that lived in rural areas. They base this view on the insufficiency of archaeological evidence to date those necropolises to the Early Iron Age, given the absence of architectural layers that can be associated with that period in mounds and settlements near the necropolises, the presence among the finds of bronze fibulae that become common in the seventh century BC in the region, and the appearance of bowls with grooved rims, a type also found at Urartian centres.²⁹

An important point in the chronological debate on the Early Iron Age in the Lake Van basin relates to the pottery labelled “grooved ware”.³⁰ Handmade pottery with grooved rims identified above the Late Bronze Age levels at Norşuntepe and Korucutepe in the Elazığ-Malatya region has been viewed as an indicator of the Early Iron Age.³¹ In parallel to the material identified in salvage excavations in the Keban and Karakaya dam areas, grooved wares were accepted as denoting the beginning of the Iron Age chronology in the Van region. However, the presence of grooved wares was found to have continued in the light of examples from surveys in the region and especially from Ayanis.³² In the light of these discussions, the interpretation of grooved wares—coming mostly from necropolises and mixed layers at mounds such as Karagündüz, Dilkaya and Van Kalesi in the Van region—as an indicator of the beginning of Early Iron Age is by now problematic.

Conclusion

The Çatak chamber tomb is an example of a traditional chamber tomb with dromos, a type which appeared from the Pre-Urartian period in the Lake Van basin and continued to be used during the period of the Urartian Kingdom. Although the Çatak tomb was damaged by natural processes (i.e., erosion) due to its location, the tomb architecture and *in situ* burial goods provide us with useful information on burial traditions and tomb architecture in the pre-Urartian period. It is similar to the tombs found in Ernis, Yoncatepe, Dilkaya and Karagündüz in terms of its dromos, building technique, multiple burials and pottery. But in other ways, it is similar to tombs found in the necropolises of the Urartian period. The unique architectural style with stone bench is not seen in other chamber tombs in the region and distinguishes the Çatak chamber tomb from them. However, bench-like architectural furnishing and niches in the Çatak chamber tomb should not only invite direct comparisons with Urartian chamber tombs. It would be better to evaluate these furnishings as primitive applications of styles later known from Urartian chamber tombs. However, the Çatak chamber tomb has other features that are similar to Urartian chamber tombs, especially in terms of finds and burial practices. The tradition of multiple burials was also commonly seen in Urartian tombs. In addition, an example of a trefoil-mouth jug, a characteristic form of Urartian red wares, was found in the Çatak chamber tomb.

²⁹ Erdem 2009.

³⁰ Konyar 2005; Erdem 2012.

³¹ Winn 1980; Bartl 2001.

³² Erdem 2009.

As for metal finds, similar ridged bracelets with snake ends are found in Urartian necropolises.³³ Although the Çatak chamber tomb has similarities to Urartian chamber tombs in terms of a dromos entrance, a multiple-burial tradition and the bracelet with snake ends, it should be emphasised that no lustrous red Urartian pottery, known as palace ware, nor any bronze belts, seals, or furniture fittings were encountered in the Çatak chamber tomb.³⁴

While its unique tomb architecture, pottery and burial practice are hallmarks of local traditions, the existence of the ridged bronze bracelet and the glass beads in the Çatak chamber tomb suggests interactions with the people of the south Lake Urmia basin.³⁵ Examples of chamber tomb architecture in which there are multiple burials are known from northwestern Iran;³⁶ nevertheless, the prevalence of grey pottery and single inhumations in northwestern Iranian necropolises differentiate burial customs there from those in the Lake Van basin.³⁷

It is not entirely clear which cultural features indicate the pre-Urartian period outlined above, or of what chronological phases it consists. In the light of uncertainties about the identification of the pre-Urartian period in the Lake Van basin, and ongoing debates on the subject, the Çatak chamber tomb, with its distinctive architectural style, the multiple burial of individuals from the same family and other finds, is an example of the chamber tomb tradition in the Lake Van basin. It is clear that we need further archaeological data from mounds and fortresses in order to address questions of how the foundation phase of the Urartian Kingdom developed in the central region, where the kingdom was established in the Lake Van basin, and the degree of cultural unity or difference in the basin prior to the foundation of the Urartian state.

³³ A bracelet discovered amongst the finds in Melekli Necropole (Barnett 1963, p. 178, fig. 32.7) in Iğdır (a Urartian necropolis) and a bracelet from Diyarbakır Museum are also ridged (San 2007, p. 22, fig. 3). Similar ridged bracelets were found in room 5 of Burned Building II of Hasanlu IVB layer (Rubinson-Marcus 2005, fig. 2/b). This type of bracelet has not been found in the excavated necropolises in Lake Van basin prior to the Urartian period.

³⁴ Konyar 2011.

³⁵ Danti 2013, p. 359.

³⁶ It has been stated that 12 bodies were buried at the Geoytepe tomb (Dyson 1965, p. 196). Another chamber tomb with multiple burials was found south of Naqadeh in Bayazidabad (Khanmohammadi 2012).

³⁷ Sagona 2012, p. 254.

POTTERY CATALOGUE

Red-Brown Ware

Fig. 6

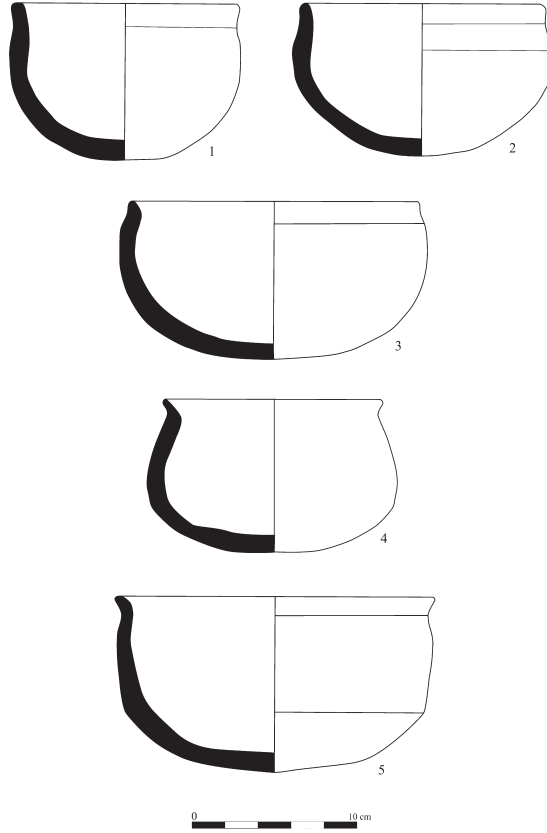


Fig. 6. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Brown paste (5 YR 5/4), self-slipped, black visible, medium sand tempered, under-fired, slightly burnished, handmade, R 13.5 cm.
- 2- Red paste (10 R 4/4), self-slipped, black visible, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), handmade, R 14.2 cm.
- 3- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, grey mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, handmade, R 17.4 cm.
- 4- Brown paste (5 YR 4/4), self-slipped, black and grey mottled, fine gritty tempered, under-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), handmade, R 7.6 cm.
- 5- Brown paste (5 YR 5/4), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), handmade, R 19 cm.

Fig. 7

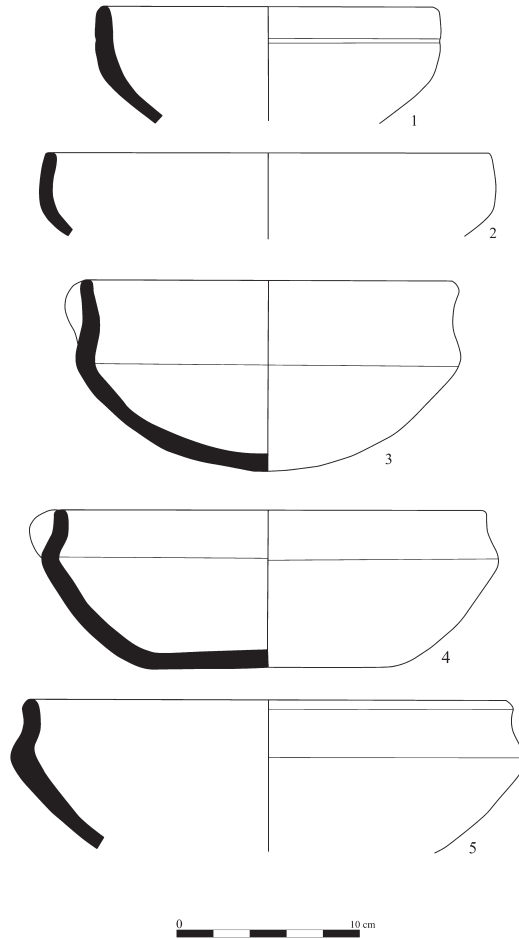


Fig. 7. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Brown paste (5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 18 cm.
- 2- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, brown and red mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, burnished, handmade, R 24 cm.
- 3- Red paste (10 R 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, unburnished, wheel-made, R 20 cm.
- 4- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, black mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, handmade, R 23 cm.
- 5- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 26 cm.

Fig. 8

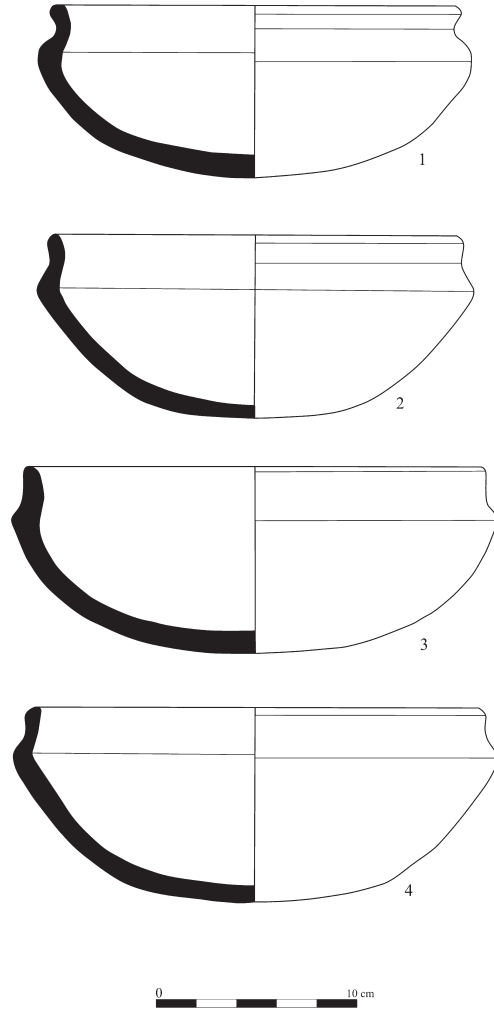


Fig. 8. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, black mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, handmade, R 19.8 cm.
- 2- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (interior), wheel-made, R 20 cm.
- 3- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, red visible, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 22.5 cm.
- 4- Red paste (2.5 YR 4/8), self-slipped, grey mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 22 cm.

Fig. 9

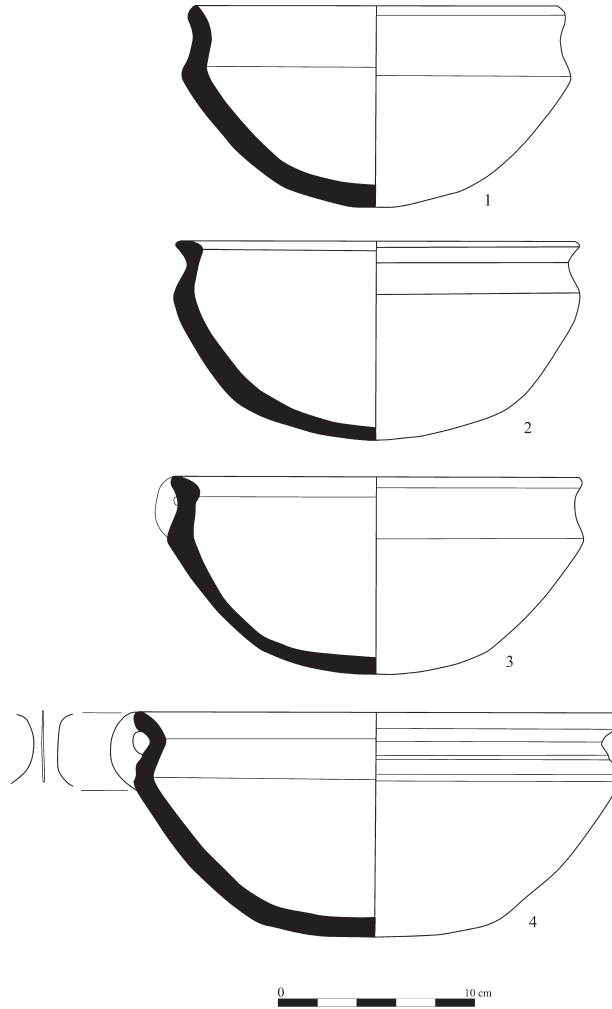


Fig. 9. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, unburnished, handmade, R 18.4 cm.
- 2- Brown paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, black mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 20 cm.
- 3- Red paste (10 R 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand and small pebble tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 20.6 cm.
- 4- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, unburnished, wheel-made, R 24.2 cm.

Fig. 10

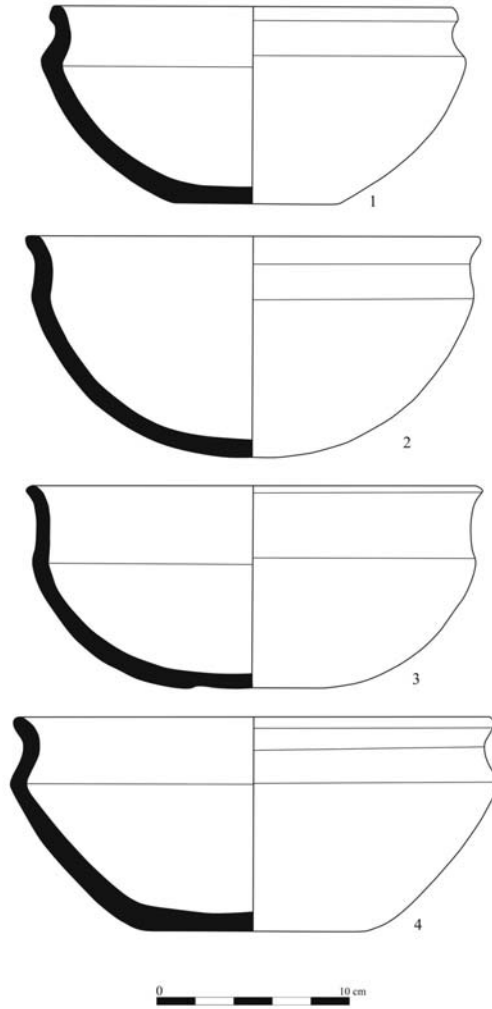


Fig. 10. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Red paste (2.5 YR 4/6), self-slipped, black visible, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 20.6 cm.
- 2- Brown paste (5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, black visible, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 23.2 cm.
- 3- Brown paste (5 YR 4/4), self-slipped, black visible, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 23 cm.
- 4- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 24.4 cm.

Fig. II

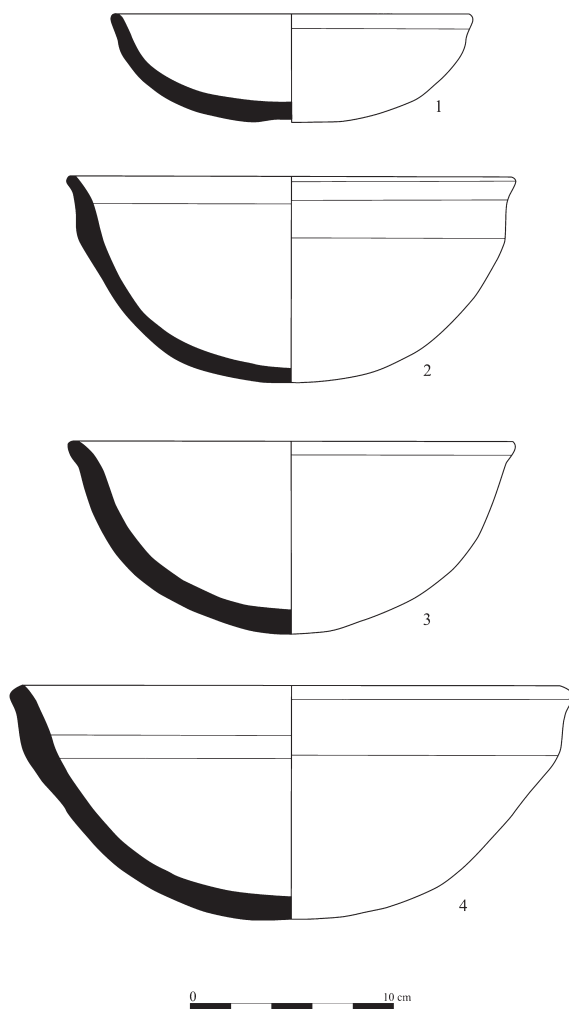


Fig. II. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Brown paste (5 YR 5/4), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, under-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 17.5 cm.
- 2- Brown paste (5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, brown mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 21.6 cm.
- 3- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, red mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 21.6 cm.
- 4- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, handmade, R 26.4 cm.

Fig. 12

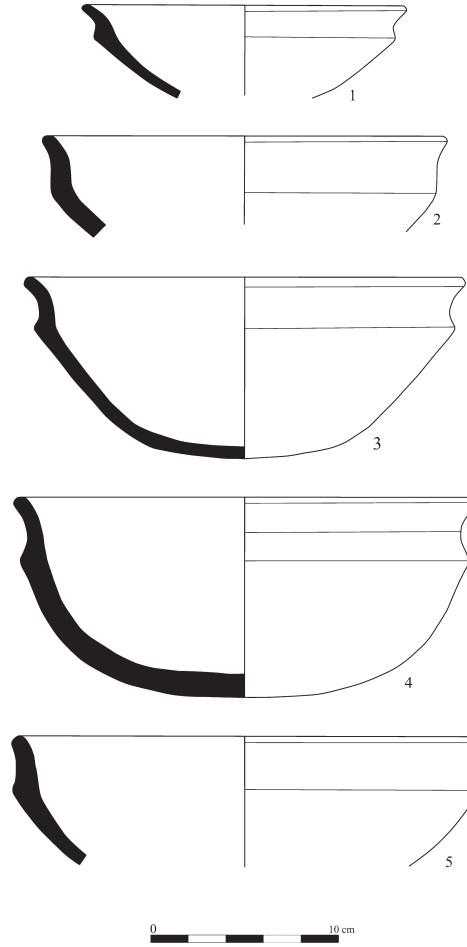


Fig. 12. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Brown paste (5 YR 5/4), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 17 cm.
- 2- Brown paste (5 YR 5/4), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, under-fired, unburnished, handmade, R 21 cm.
- 3- Brown paste (5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 23 cm.
- 4- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, handmade, R 24 cm.
- 5- Brown paste (5 YR 4/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, under-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 24 cm.

Fig. 13

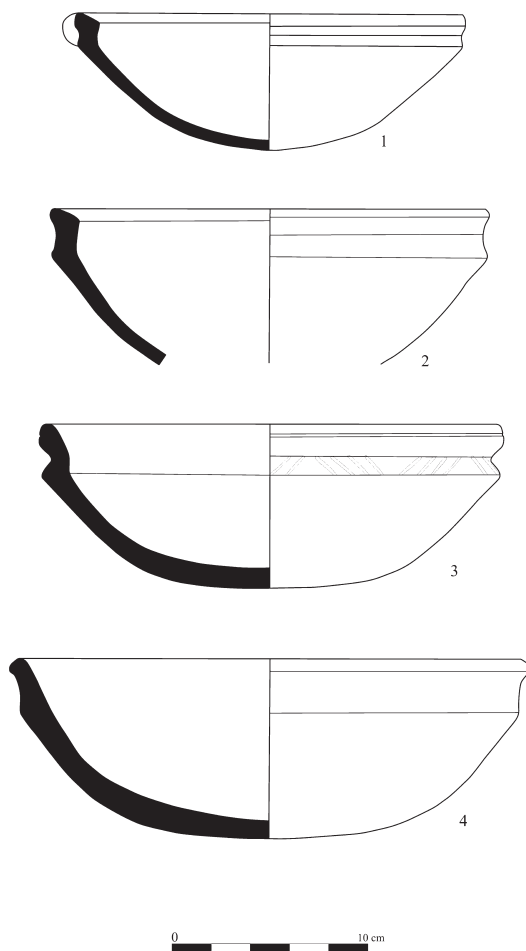


Fig. 13. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Brown paste (5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, brown visible, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 19.6 cm.
- 2- Brown paste (5 YR 4/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 22 cm.
- 3- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 23 cm.
- 4- Red paste (10 R 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 25.6 cm.



a



b



c



d



e



f



g



h

Fig. 14. Red-Brown Ware Bowls (a-h)

Fig. 15

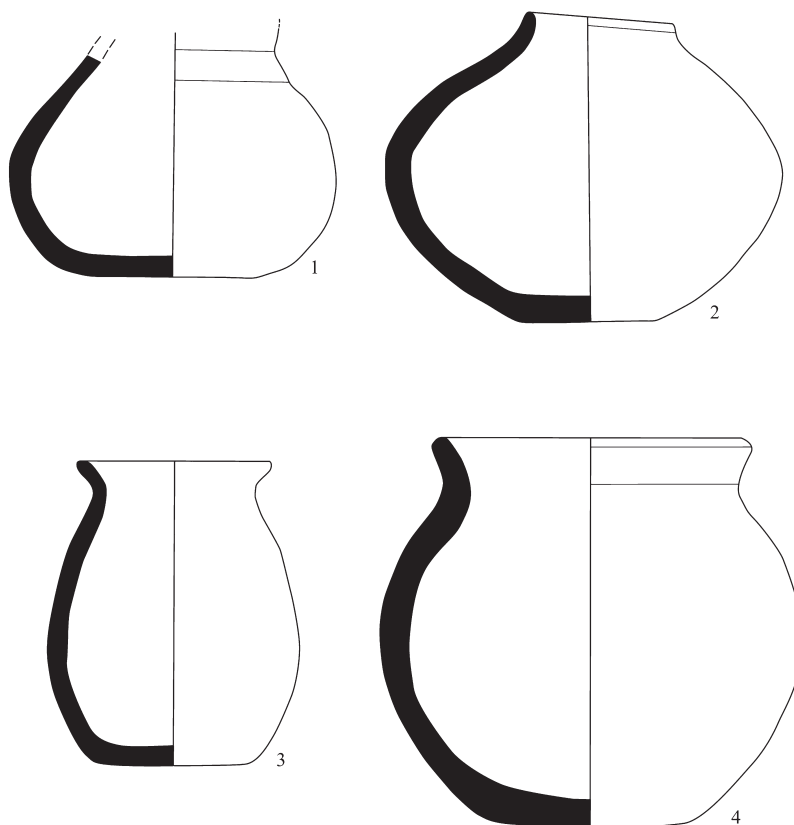


Fig. 15. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), handmade, R 7 cm.
- 2- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 6.3 cm.
- 3- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, handmade, R 8.2 cm.
- 4- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, black mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 13 cm.

Fig. 16

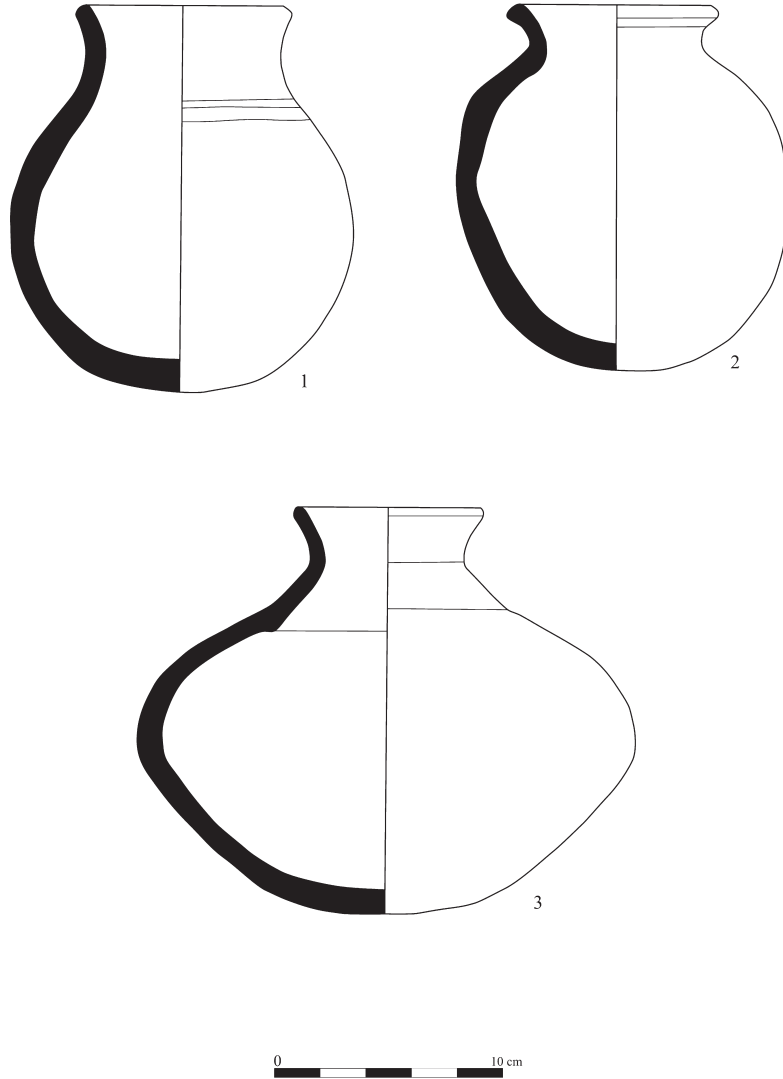


Fig. 16. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Brown paste (5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, under-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 8.7 cm.
- 2- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), handmade, R 8.4 cm.
- 3- Red paste (10 R 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, unburnished, handmade, R 8 cm.

Fig. 17

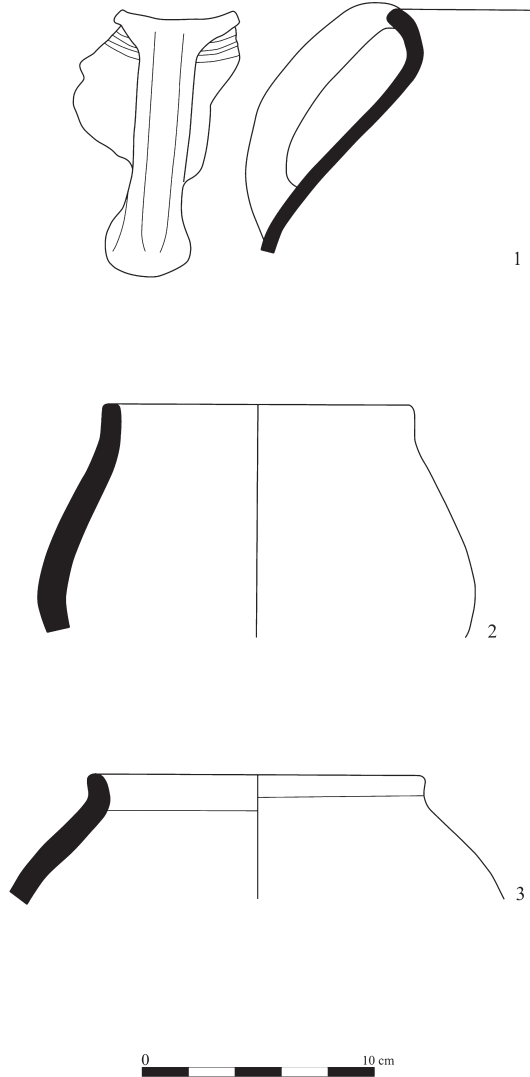


Fig. 17. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Red paste (10 R 4/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made.
- 2- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, black mottled, medium sand tempered, under-fired, slightly burnished, handmade, R 13 cm.
- 3- Brown paste (5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, under-fired, slightly burnished (interior), handmade, R 14 cm.

Fig. 18

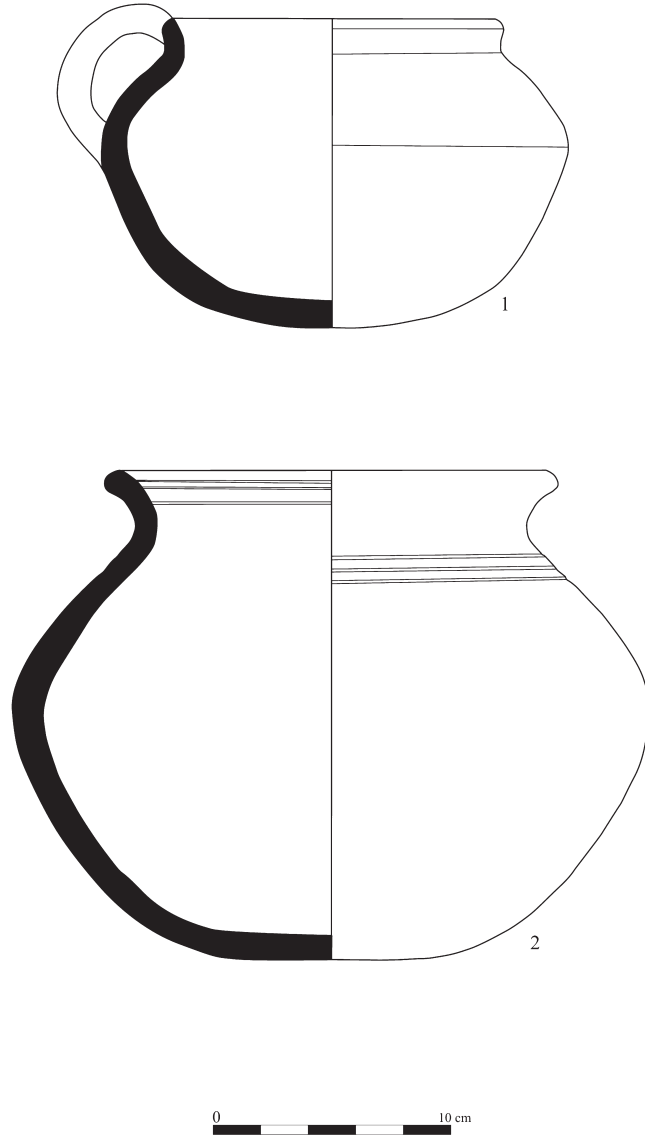


Fig. 18. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Brown paste (5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 13.6 cm.
- 2- Red paste (10 R 5/8), self-slipped, red mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 18 cm.



a



b



c



d

Fig. 19. Red-Brown Ware (a-d)

Fig. 20

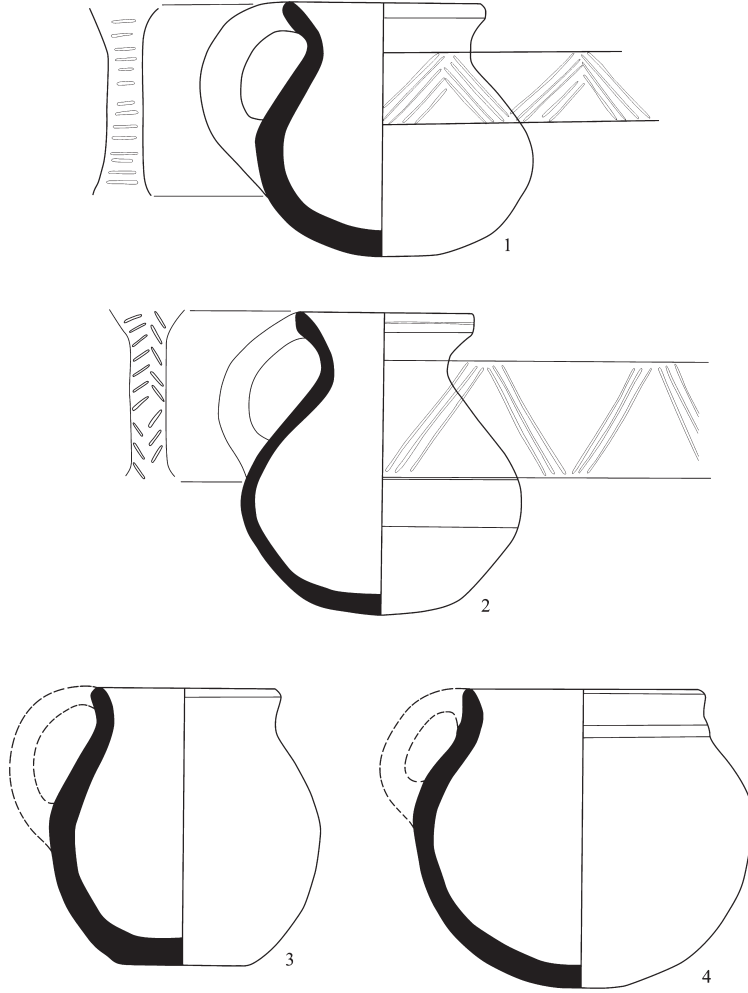


Fig. 20. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Brown paste (5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, black mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), handmade, R 8.8 cm.
- 2- Brown paste (5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 7.8 cm.
- 3- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, black mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), handmade, R 8 cm.
- 4- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (dışı), handmade, R 10.4 cm.



a



b

Fig. 21. Red-Brown Ware (a-b)

Fig. 22

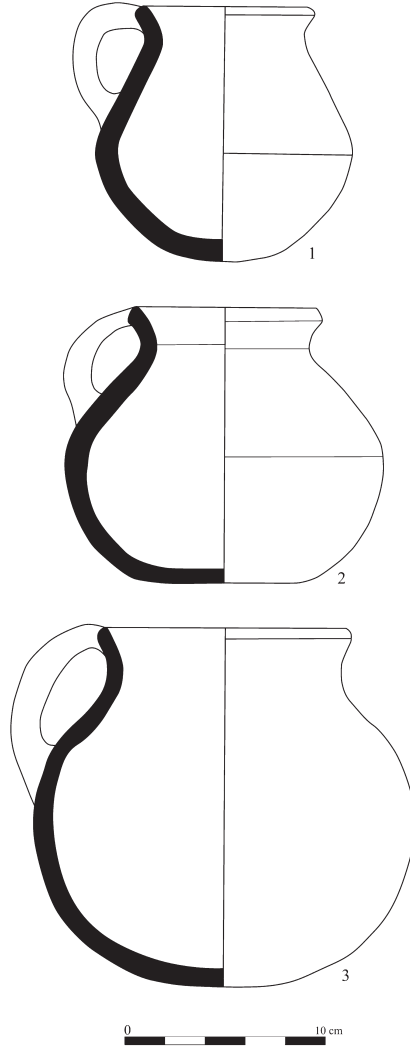


Fig. 22. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), handmade, R 8.2 cm.
- 2- Brown paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 9 cm.
- 3- Brown paste (5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 12 cm.

Fig. 23

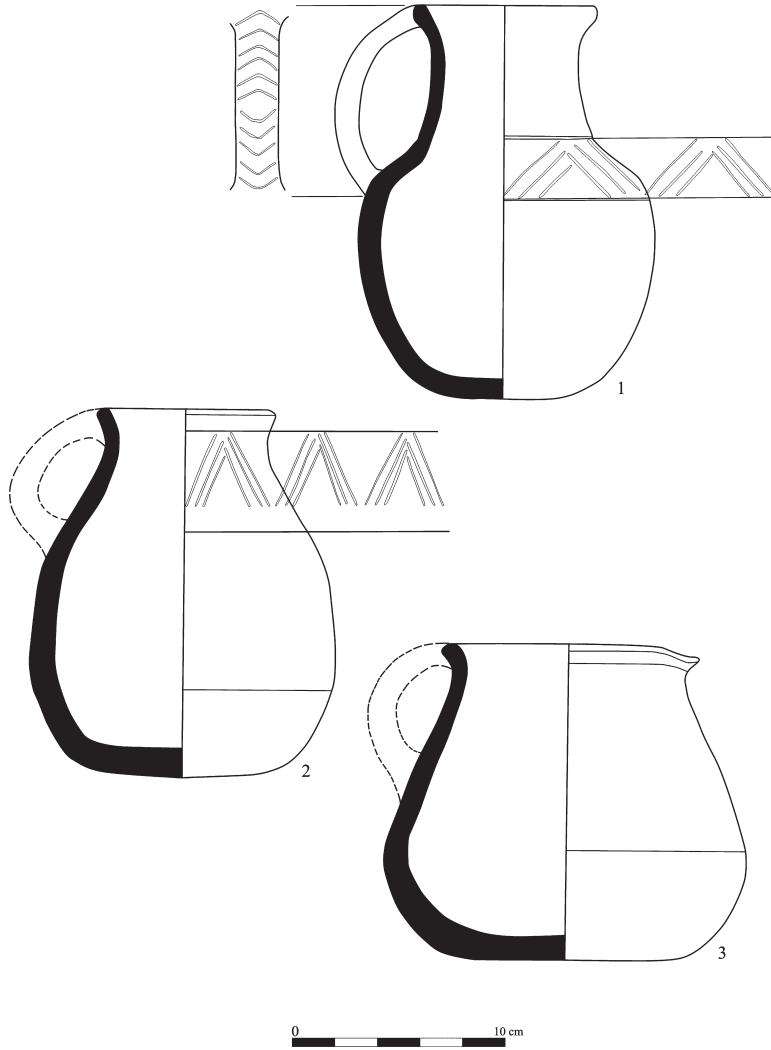
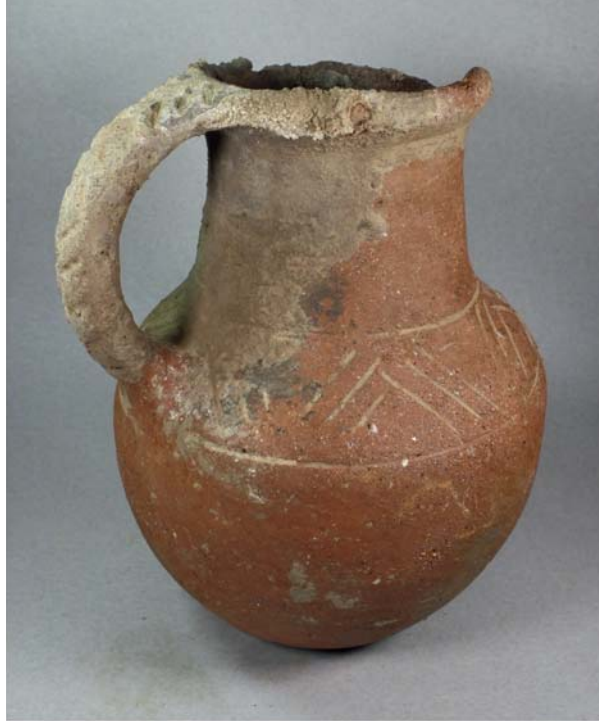


Fig. 23. Red-Brown Ware

- 1- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 8.6 cm.
- 2- Brown paste (5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, black mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), handmade, R 7.6 cm.
- 3- Red paste (2.5 YR 5/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), handmade, R 10 cm.



a



b

Fig. 24. Red-Brown Ware (a-b)

Pink-Buff Ware

Fig. 25

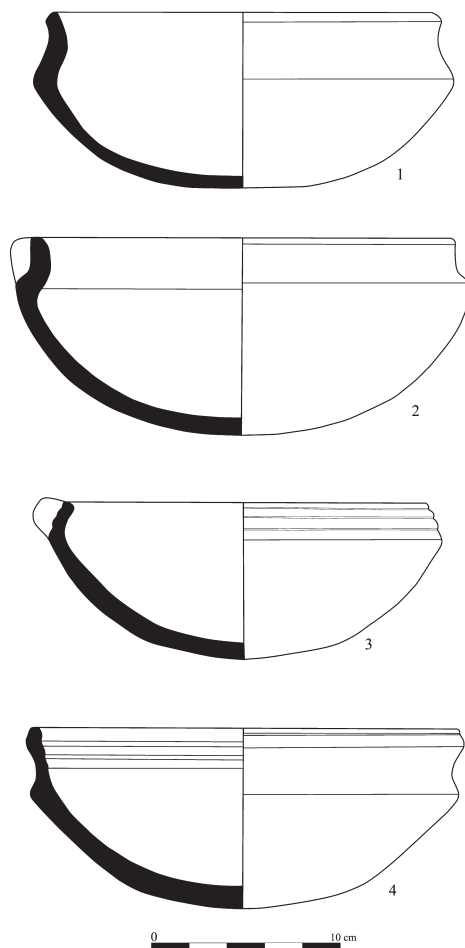


Fig. 25. Pink-Buff Ware

- 1- Pink paste (10 R 6/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, unburnished, wheel-made, R 20 cm.
- 2- Pink paste (10 R 6/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, unburnished, wheel-made, R 22 cm.
- 3- Pink paste (10 R 6/8), self-slipped, medium sand and small pebble tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 19 cm.
- 4- Pink paste (2.5 YR 6/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, under-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 22.4 cm.

Fig. 26

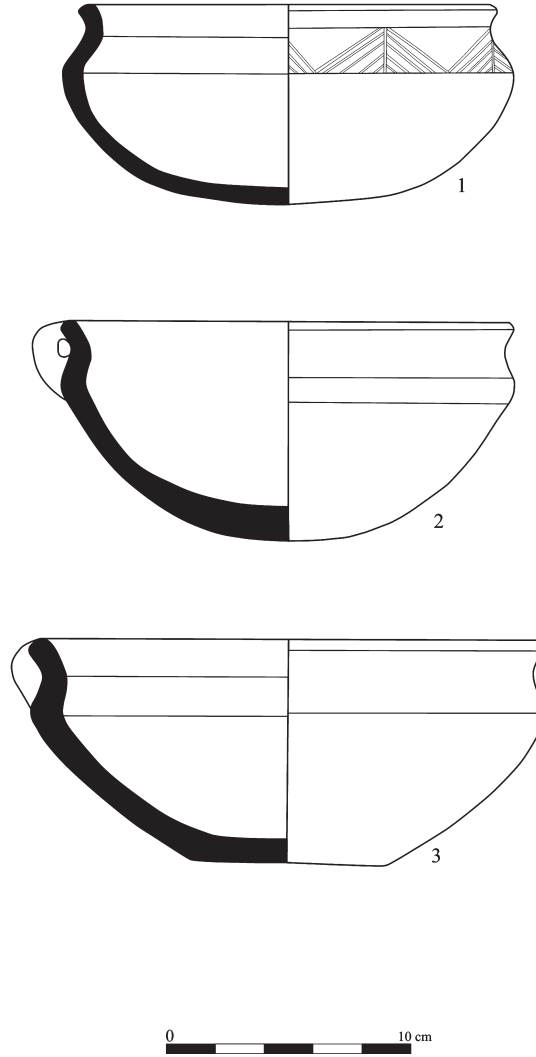


Fig. 26. Pink-Buff Ware

- 1- Pink paste (2.5 YR 6/8), self-slipped, black mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 16.4 cm.
- 2- Pink paste (10 R 7/8), self-slipped, brown mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, handmade, R 10 cm.
- 3- Pink paste (2.5 YR 6/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, unburnished, wheel-made, R 20.2 cm.

Fig. 27

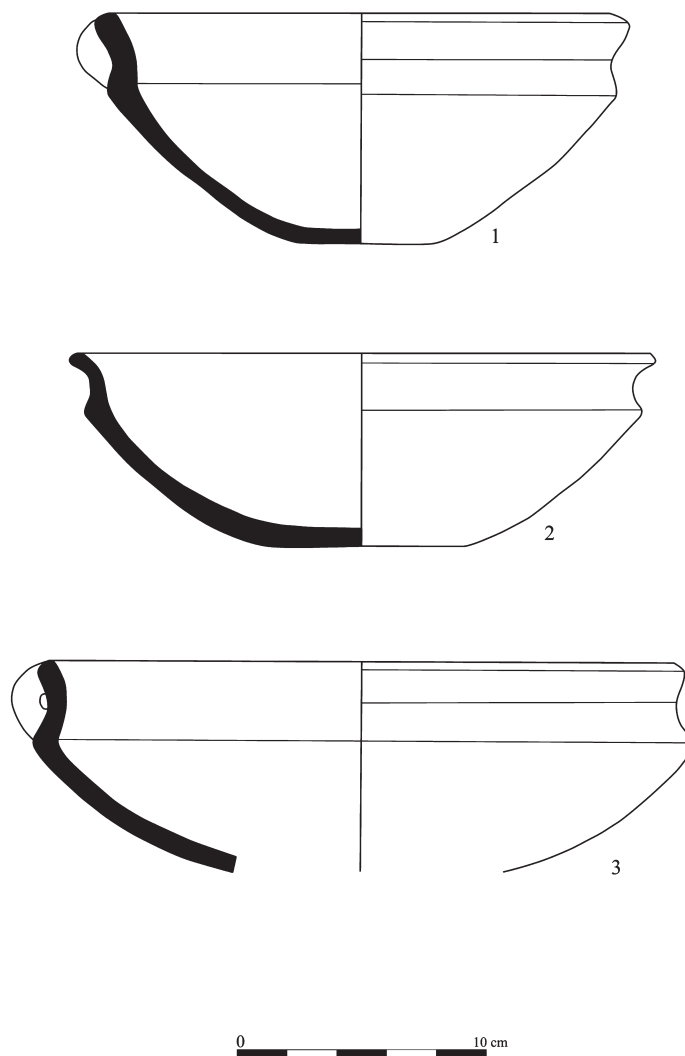


Fig. 27. Pink-Buffer Ware

- 1- Pink paste (2.5 YR 6/8), self-slipped, black mottled, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), wheel-made, R 20.6 cm.
- 2- Pink paste (10 R 6/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, unburnished, wheel-made, R 19 cm.
- 3- Pink paste (10 R 6/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished, wheel-made, R 19.8 cm.



a



b



c

Fig. 28. Pink-Buff Ware (a-c)

Fig. 29

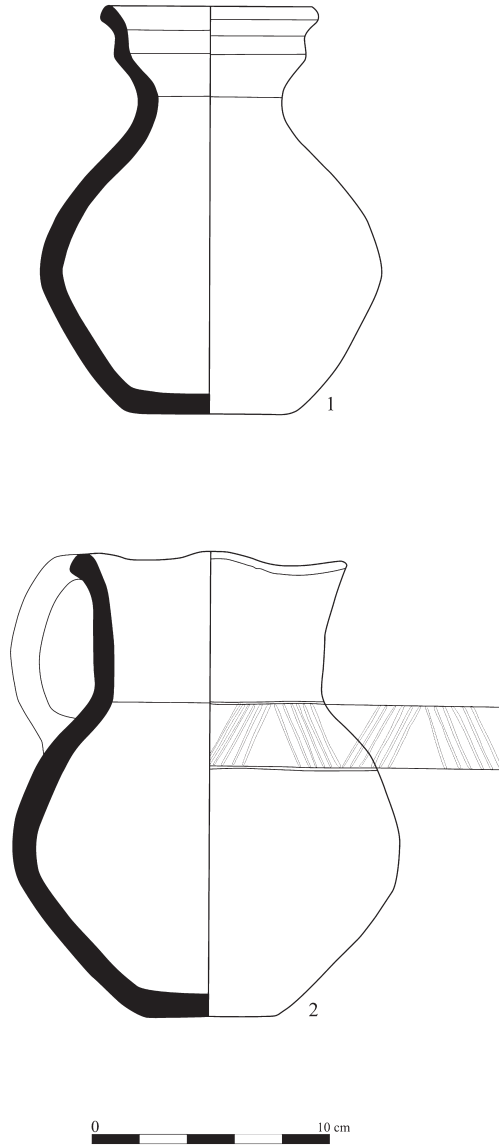


Fig. 29. Pink-Buff Ware

- 1- Pink paste (2.5 YR 6/8), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, unburnished, handmade, R 8.6 cm.
- 2- Pink paste (2.5 YR 6/6), self-slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, slightly burnished (exterior), handmade, R 11 cm.



a



b

Fig. 30. Pink-Buff Ware (a-b)

Red-Slipped Ware

Fig. 31

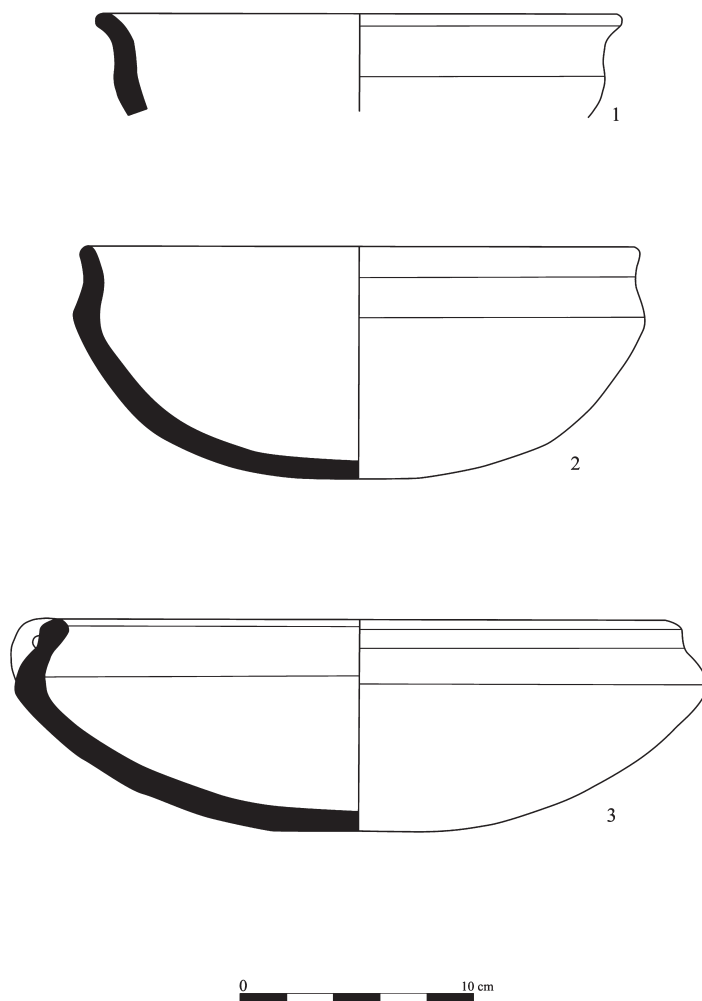


Fig. 31. Red-Slipped Ware

- 1- Red paste (10 R 5/8), red (10 R 4/8) slipped, medium sand tempered, medium-fired, burnished, wheel-made, R 22 cm.
- 2- Red paste (10 R 5/8), red (10 R 4/6) slipped (interior and exterior of rim), medium sand tempered, medium-fired, unburnished, wheel-made, R 23.4 cm.
- 3- Pink paste (2.5 YR 7/6), self-slipped (interior), red (10 R 4/6) slipped (exterior), medium sand tempered, medium-fired, unburnished, wheel-made, R 26 cm.



a



b

Fig. 32. Red-Slipped Ware (a-b)

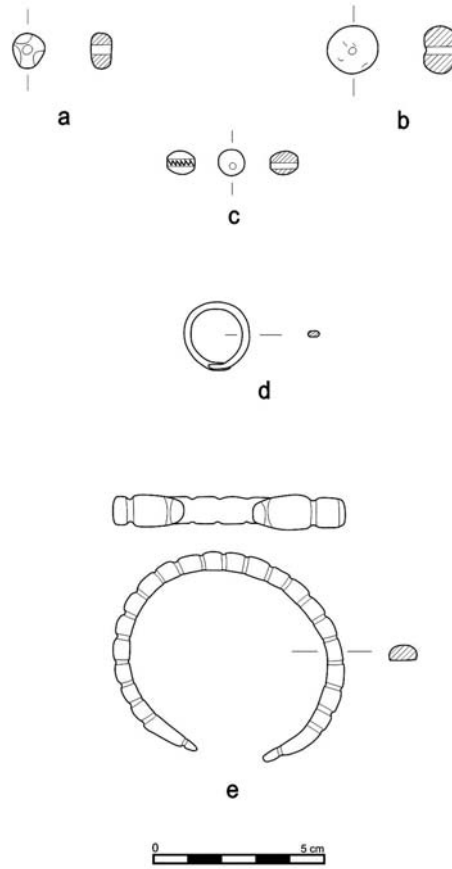


Fig. 33. Small finds unearthed from Çatak chamber tomb (beads: a-c; ring: d; bracelet: e)

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