

## THE EARLY IRON AGE POTTERY TYPOLOGY IN TURKISH THRACE

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**Abstract:** Since the Early Iron Age in the Thracian Region is characterised by the existence of illiterate communities, the archaeological record represents the most important source of information for defining this period of the region's history. The best represented category of archaeological finds is undoubtedly the pottery.

The research on the pottery finds from Turkish Thrace, which constitutes a large part of Eastern Thrace, is generally based on short-term projects of the 1980s and 1990s, and the definitions and theories put forward during these periods have survived until today without much change. In recent years, increased research in the Balkans has led to a diversification of the documentation, information and interpretations regarding the Early Iron Age pottery repertoire.

Within the scope of the doctoral thesis prepared by the author between 2021 and 2023, the pottery repertoire of the region has been classified and its cultural connections have been discussed based on revisiting the results of old excavations and surveys carried out in Turkish Thrace and evaluating the results of new surveys.

The data reveal that the Early Iron Age pottery of Eastern Thrace was influenced by the pottery of the Middle and Late Bronze Age societies of the northern and north-western Balkan region, especially during the first phase of the period. In addition, it could be determined that the Early Iron Age communities from Eastern Thrace developed cultural relations both within the limits of this territory and with other parts of Thrace.

With an Early Iron Age culture that is open to environmental interaction but also has strong internal dynamics, Eastern Thrace was a noteworthy transitional region for the transmission of Balkan cultural elements carried to Anatolia, the Aegean and the Mediterranean at the beginning of the period.

**Rezumat:** Dat fiind faptul că prima epocă a fierului în regiunea Traciei este caracterizată de existența unor comunități ce nu cunoșteau scrisul, cea mai importantă sursă de cunoaștere rămâne cea a descoperirilor arheologice. Dintre acestea, cea mai răspândită categorie este cea a ceramicii.

Studierea descoperirilor ceramice din Tracia turcească, regiune ce constituie o parte importantă a Traciei de Est, au fost în general bazate pe proiecte de scurtă durată desfășurate în anii 1980 și 1990, iar definițiile și teoriile puse în circulație au continuat să fie utilizate până în prezent fără mari schimbări. Recent, dezvoltarea cercetărilor pe această temă în Balcani a dus la o diversificare a documentației, informației și interpretărilor privind repertoriul ceramic al primei epoci a fierului.

Ca parte a lucrării de doctorat pregătite de autor între anii 2021 și 2023, s-a propus o clasificare a repertoriului ceramic al regiunii și s-au discutat legăturile culturale cu alte regiuni, pe baza vechilor cercetări arheologice și cercetări de suprafață, la care s-a adăugat evaluarea rezultatelor cercetărilor de suprafață întreprinse recent.

Datele obținute arată că ceramica primei epoci a fierului din Tracia de Est a fost influențată de tradițiile păstrate din Bronzul Mijlociu și Târziu din nord și nord-vestul a regiunii balcanice, în special la începutul primei epoci a fierului. În plus, există dovezi că aceste comunități din Tracia de Est întrețineau legături nu doar în interiorul regiunii, ci și cu celelalte părți ale Traciei.

Cu o primă epocă a fierului caracterizată de deschidere spre interacțiuni cu alte zone, dar și de o dinamică internă puternică, Tracia Răsăriteană a reprezentat o regiune importantă pentru transmiterea trăsăturilor culturale balcanice spre Anatolia, Egeea și Mediterana la începutul acestei perioade.

**Keywords:** Eastern Thrace, Early Iron Age, Pottery, Ceramic Forms, Northern Balkans.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Tracia de est, Perioada timpurie a epocii fierului, ceramică, forme, Nordul Balcanilor.

## INTRODUCTION

Although the Early Iron Age pottery of the Thracian Region is generally recognized for its specific form, decoration and clay characteristics, it is often overlooked that it shows significant differences in detail within the chronological period of approximately six centuries. So much so that the Early Iron Age pottery from Anatolian cities such as Troy and Gordion is often referred to with general names such as "Buckelkeramik", "Knobbed Ware", "Barbarian Pottery", "Balkan Pottery", etc., and most researchers do not pay attention to the changes that can be noticed in the succeeding archaeological layers.

The ceramics of the period found in the Turkish Thrace during the surveys of M. Özdoğan and in the last layer of the excavations in Aşağıpınar are not described in detail, but with a general designation such as "Late Bronze Age ceramics" or "Early Iron Age ceramics"<sup>1</sup>. A similar practice can be seen in the case of the surveys in the Thracian part of Istanbul<sup>2</sup>. In the 1980s, I. Czyborra conducted a research on the Early Iron Age in Eastern Thrace, covering Turkey, Bulgaria and Greece, and, for the first time, the ceramics of the region were classified in detail in terms of period characteristics and published in a catalogue<sup>3</sup>.

This study, based on pottery found during older surveys in Turkish Thrace, during excavations and also found during the surveys carried out by us between 2021-2023, will try to present the form classification, decoration characteristics and cultural connections of the Early Iron Age ceramics in the region (Fig. 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Özdoğan 1982a; Özdoğan 1982b; Özdoğan 1983; Özdoğan 1984; Özdoğan 1985; Özdoğan 1986a; Özdoğan 1986b; Özdoğan 1988; Özdoğan 1990; Özdoğan 1996; Özdoğan 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Aydıngün, Aydıngün 2013, 65-78; Dönmez 2011, 19-25; Dönmez 2017, 93-116.

<sup>3</sup> Czyborra 2001.

## COMPOSITION AND TECHNOLOGICAL DETAILS OF THE EARLY IRON AGE POTTERY FROM EASTERN THRACE

All the Early Iron Age material of the region is handmade and the paste consists of poorly sieved earthenware with different sized stones, sand and sometimes organic material. On the other hand, a remarkable feature of most of the ceramics is the presence of "mica" in the paste, which provides a white lustre when exposed to light.

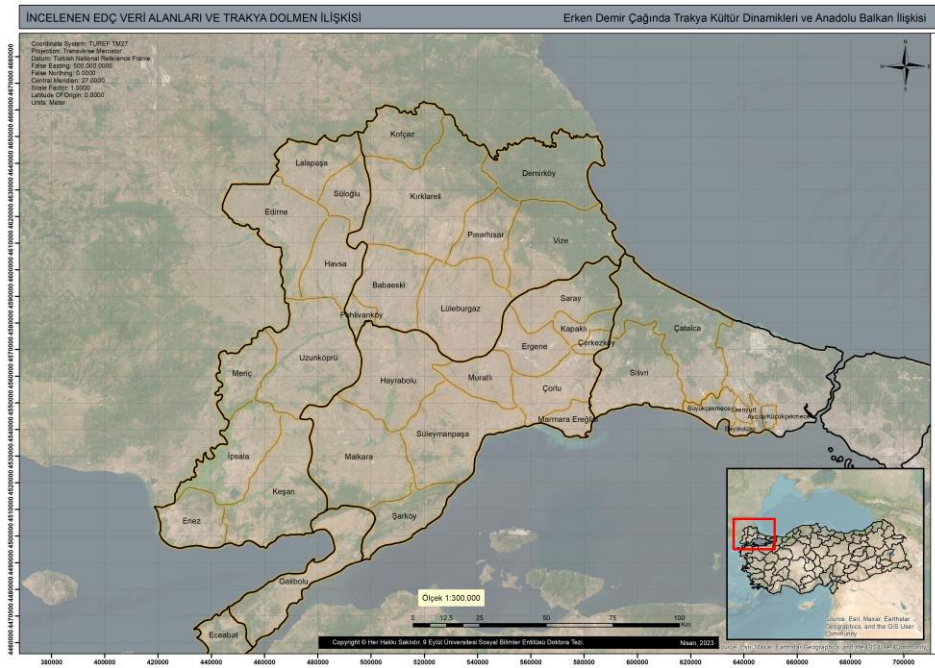


Fig. 1. The area under study. Turkish Thrace.

It is considered that the pottery was fired at an average temperature of 400-600°C. Differences in the colour of the paste can be observed due to the low temperature. Although the paste structure of the examined potsherds is generally in black, grey, blackish grey tones, it could be noticed that some of the vessels have yellowish red, light brown, or reddish brown tones.

The vessels have sometimes a slip in shades of the paste colour made by thinning the paste, and sometimes they are decorated with a slip in shades of grey, blackish grey, red and brown colours, different from the paste colour.

Portable X-ray Fluorescence Spectrometry (P-XRF) elemental chemical analyses of twelve different sherds from several analysed sites revealed high levels of silica, aluminium and iron in the ceramics of the region<sup>4</sup> (Fig. 2).

The two base sherds, found at the Kocatepe settlement in the Suloglu Valley in the North-North-eastern part of Edirne and the Yukarıova settlement in the Tozakli Valley in the west of Pınarhisar District of Kırklareli Province respectively, give us clues about the method of shaping vessels by hand in Eastern Thrace during the Early Iron Age. The wicker traces on the base of both vessels suggest that the vessels were placed on a wicker base and left to dry during pottery production.

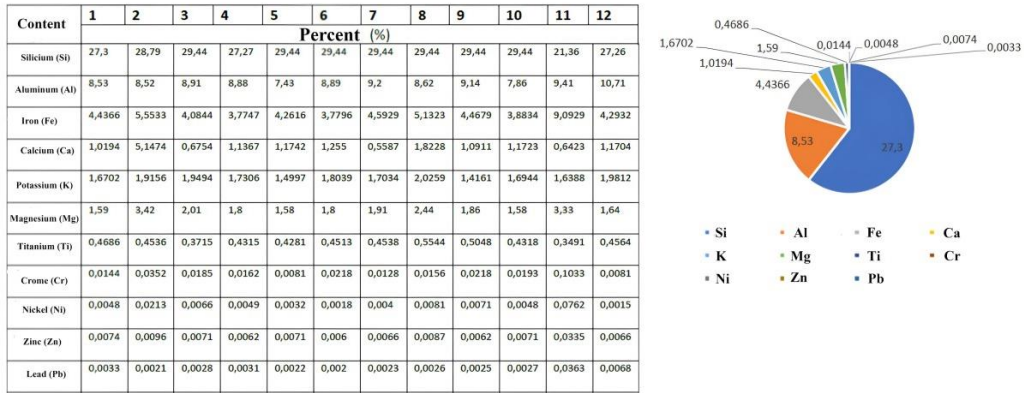


Fig. 2. Elements and their ratios in the paste content of ceramics from Turkish Thrace.

### MAIN VESSEL FORMS IDENTIFIED IN TURKISH THRACE

The identification of different forms of pottery in Eastern Thrace and the determination of form types were mainly based on the complete or nearly complete vessels from the excavations at Taşlıcabayır Tumulus, Aşağıpınar Mound and Menekşe Çatağı Mound. Due to the detailed classification of the vessels, the forms and the main types of these forms could be identified, and the ceramic sherds found during the surveys could be grouped in terms of form by making use of this classification.

Accordingly, the main vessel forms in the region are categorised under five main headings: *liquid service vessels*, which can be defined as *jugs* or *mugs*, *single-handled drinking vessels*, *double-handled drinking vessels*, *dining vessels* and *storage vessels*. In addition to these, examples that can be defined under the headings of *cult vessels*,

<sup>4</sup> The analyses were carried out by dr. Ramazan Hacımustafaoğlu, Faculty Member of Torbalı Vocational High School, Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir.

*potsherds, miniature vessels and unique forms*, which are represented by fewer examples, were identified.<sup>5</sup>

### Jugs

One of the most frequently encountered forms in the Early Iron Age excavations and researches in the Eastern Thrace Region is the jug.

I. Czyborra, in her diagram of the distribution and sub-types of this vessel type in the region, suggests that only one form, the jug, remains within the borders of Eastern Thrace<sup>6</sup>. However, the analyses carried out by us have revealed that the jug and mash pot form, which was in use in Eastern Thrace during all phases of the Early Iron Age, comprises eight distinct types (S/M.1-8) (Fig. 3, Tab. 1).

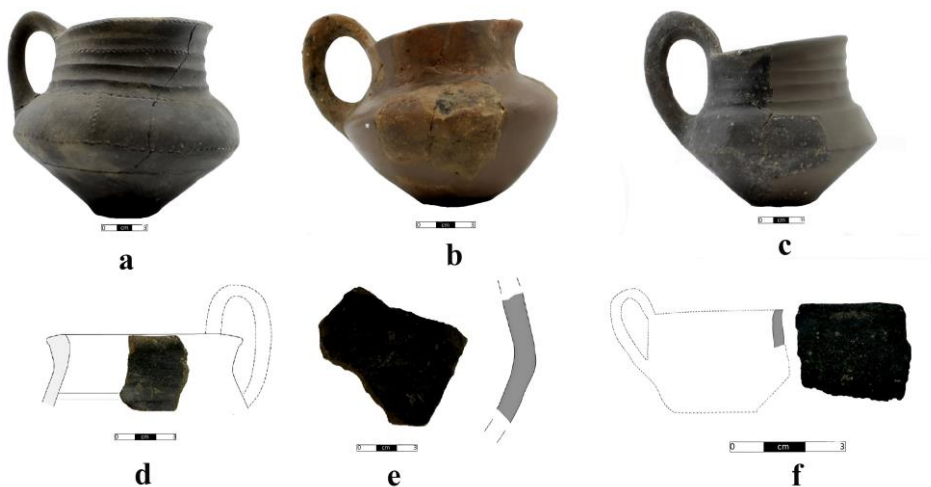


Fig. 3. Jugs.

Some of the eight different jug forms also present further variations. For example, the items included in type S/M. 1 with high necks with fluted decoration represent sub-type S/M. 1a, while the jugs with lower necks constitute sub-type S/M 1b.

The best examples of the jug form can be found among the finds from Taşlıcabayır Tumulus. Apart from these, both the excavations at the Ağağıpınar Mound and the excavations at the Menekşe Çatağı Mound yielded all or nearly all vessels that can be classified in the jug form. In addition, during the surveys conducted in the Turkish Thrace, Arpalık Dolmen and Hacılar Dolmen, Maydos

<sup>5</sup> Forms are only briefly defined in this article. For the details of the form distinction, see: Doğan 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Czyborra 2001, 61, Karte 122.

Kilisetepe excavations yielded many sherds that can be classified as different types of the jug form.

### Single Handle Drink Cups

Single-handled drinking vessels constitute another large group among the complete or almost completely preserved Early Iron Age pottery repertoire of the region. Although some of the types have a form similar to the jugs, they are differentiated from them by their size and purpose of use. This form is very rich in terms of variety as well as density of finds. Seventeen different types (K. 1-17) were found in Eastern Thrace excavations, especially the items from the excavation of Taşlıcabayır Tumulus (Fig. 4, Tab. 2)<sup>7</sup>.



Fig. 4. Cups.

### Double Handle Drink Cups

The double-handled drinking vessels represent a form that is also known in the literature as "Kantharos-Like Vessel" because of its resemblance to the kantharos form in the Ancient Aegean vessel repertoire. They usually have two opposite high handles above the level of the rim and a bulging body with a bulging belly. This form essentially represents ceremonial drinking vessels, which were widely used in the Balkans, the Aegean and the Near East since the beginning of the Bronze Age.

<sup>7</sup> Özdoğan 1987.

There are three types of this form (ÇKK. 1-3). The sherd found during the excavations at Taşlıcabayır Tumulus and inventoried in the Edirne Museum with the inventory number 1340 is a representative of the ÇKK. 1 type (Fig. 5a). A sherd found at Hacılar Dolmen and registered as artefacts for study at the Edirne Museum is an example of type 2 (Fig. 5b), while another sherd found at Menekşe Çatağı Mound and registered at the Tekirdağ Museum under inventory number 2682 is an example of type 3 (Fig. 5c).



Fig. 5. Double Handle Drink Cups.

### Food Containers

Among the examples described under the heading of food vessels are deep bowls without handles and their small and splayed types, jars of large volume, and large and splayed vessels with handles used for cooking.

The specimens that have been found in various forms within the borders of Turkish Thrace so far are divided into five types (YK. 1-5), according to the differences in their formal characteristics.

Among the finds, all or almost all of the food vessels are large-sized vessels with deep body. The excavations at Bahçelik/Eski Kadın Rescue Excavation, Aşağıpınar Excavations and Menekşe Çatağı Mound yielded complete or nearly complete examples of this form.



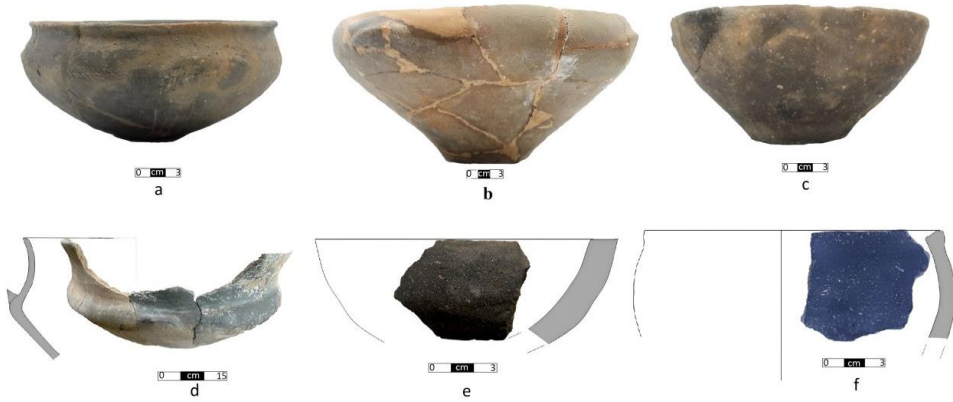


Fig. 6. Food Containers.

### Storage Containers

One of the most common types of pottery used in cultures where agriculture and shepherd culture was the dominant lifestyle is the large-sized, wide-mouthed storage vessels where cereals and liquids were stored. These vessels usually have a rough appearance and sloppy workmanship and are sometimes adorned with plastic ornaments.

According to the classification of all vessels and sherds found in Turkish Thrace, six different types of storage vessel forms (DK. 1-6) were identified in the region.

The vessel with the inventory number 1782 (Fig. 7/a), which was found in fragments during the excavation of Hacilar Dolmen, restored and exhibited in the Edirne Museum in a nearly complete form, resembles the "Amphora Type" vessels common among the Balkan Early Iron Age cultures, but its lack of handles suggests that it was a storage vessel used locally. This vessel represents *DK. 1 Type*.

*DK. Type 2* is divided into two sub-groups. Two vessels dated to the Early Iron Age found at the Aşağı Pınar Mound and recorded in the Kırklareli Museum under inventory numbers 269 and 508 (Fig. 7/b-c) and another similar vessel with inventory number 29, which is described as "Kırklareli Find" in the Museum inventory record, represent the *DK. 2 Type* and can be analysed in two subgroups with some details

The *DK. 3 type* storage vessels, which have a flat rim with a width equal to the body diameter, a steep profile lip, a conical body and a partially raised round base, are represented by the example with inventory number 1535 (Fig. 7/d) found during the excavations at Taşlıcabayır Tumulus and exhibited at the Edirne Museum, and the vessel with inventory number 2792 found at Menekşe Çatağı Mound and preserved at the Tekirdağ Museum (Fig. 7/e).





Fig. 8. Storage Containers.

The vessel with museum inventory number 1117 (Fig. 7/f), which was brought to the Kırklareli Museum as a find from the Aşağıpınar Mound, is an example of the DK. 4 type storage vessel of Eastern Thrace with a wide mouth that does not form a straight line, a conical body that narrows in a near-vertical curve from the mouth to the bottom, and a slightly protruding and defined base.

The DK. 5 type storage vessel resembles the two cup forms of the region (K.9 and K.10). These storage vessels, which are much larger than mugs, are represented by a vessel from Aşağıpınar, which is registered in the inventory of the Kırklareli Museum under the number 268 (Fig. 7/g). Since almost half of the vessel is reconstructed, it is not known whether it had handles or not.

Apart from these, the rim (Fig. 8) and neck fragment identified with the code BAT. 1 found in the cult well during the archaeological surveys around the Çatalca district of Istanbul in Thrace, and the fragment numbered HAC. 2 (Fig. 8) found in the excavation of Hacilar Dolmen represent a different form of storage vessel.

The flaring rim and the shoulder section, which turns outwards from the neck with a deep curve, are close to the vessel profile of the amphora-like storage vessels known from many important sites dated to the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age such as Babadag<sup>8</sup>, Insula Banului<sup>9</sup>, Saharna<sup>10</sup>, Troy<sup>11</sup>, Bulgaria Ada Tepe<sup>12</sup>, Agios Mamas

<sup>8</sup> Ailincăi 2020, fig. 2/5

<sup>9</sup> Ailincăi 2020, fig. 2/43, 50

<sup>10</sup> Ailincăi 2020, fig. 2/43, 96

<sup>11</sup> Aslan 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Dimitrova 2011, fig. 2/1

Mound<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, it can be said that these three sherds constitute the *DK. 6 type* of the Eastern Thracian storage vessel forms.

In addition, the sherd of a storage vessel with inventory number BAH. 27 (Fig. 8), one of the sherds found during the museum excavations at the Bahceklik/Eski Kadın data site in the Maritsa Valley, is unlike other storage vessel forms with its flaring profile with thick lip rim and coarse paste. Nevertheless, the profile of this sherd is reminiscent of a form that has parallels in Late Bronze Age amphora type storage vessels<sup>14</sup>. The wide mouth opening of vessel BAH. 27 reveals that this vessel represents a wide-mouthed storage vessel rather than an amphora type. All these characteristics suggest that vessel BAH. 27 is *a local form produced in Eastern Thrace*.

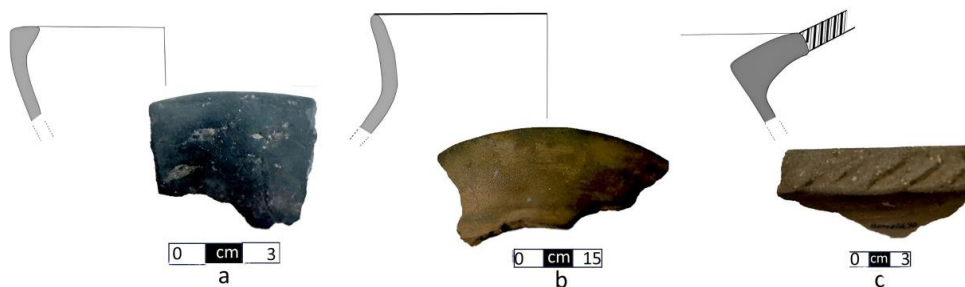


Fig. 8. Storage containers.

### Other Forms

The ceremonial drinking vessel found in the excavation of Taşlıcabayır Tumulus and recorded in the inventory of Edirne Museum under the number 1796 is a vessel of a type that could have been used in a cult ceremony, based on its unique character (Fig. 9).

The vessel has a small mouth with flaring lip and a short and narrow neck with a concave bow profile and fluted pattern. The body widens outwards from the neck to the center with a wide curve, continues to narrow in the lower half and ends with a flat base plane close to the diameter of the rim. The vessel has two perforated handles on the abdomen, and what makes it unique are the four spouts rising vertically on the shoulder.

<sup>13</sup> Horejs 2007, Abb. 99/BII.

<sup>14</sup> Horejs 2007, Abb.134.

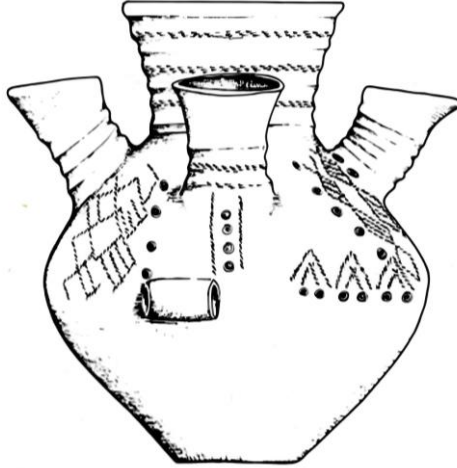


Fig. 9. Taşlıcabayır Tumulus, Ceremony Container (Edirne Museum).



0 cm 5

a



0 cm 2

b



0 cm 2

c



0 cm 5

d

Fig. 10. Unique vessels.

A vessel from the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age finds of the Menekşe Çatağı Mound, exhibited in the Tekirdag Museum under inventory number 2907, is recorded in the excavation committee and museum records under the name "pot base". (Fig. 10/a)

The vessel has an open cylindrical form with upper and lower sides, and the upper and lower lip edges with a flaring profile, and is hand-made.

The excavations at the Menekşe Çatağı Mound yielded examples of miniature vessels, consisting of small bowls in different forms and shapes, quite clumsily shaped. Two items preserved in the Tekirdag Museum are recorded under inventory numbers 2605 and 2770 (Fig. 10/b-c).

In the section of the Suakacağı settlement, which was used as a sand quarry by DSI in the early 2000s, we found a footed bowl SA. 2, included in the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age vessel repertoire of Eastern Thrace as a vessel form for which there are no analogies. The vessel has a rounded top with raised sides and a pedestal base with a high pedestal foot. The partially preserved elevation in the centre of the top is remarkable. SA 2 may have been an incense burner or a footed oil lamp/candle holder (Fig. 10/c).

### POTTERY DECORATION

The decorations on the ceramics found during the excavations and surveys in Eastern Thrace were obtained by using several main techniques: *Relief Technique*, *Engraving Technique*, *Stamp Technique*, *Primer Paint Technique*.

Relief decoration generally includes horn-shaped, lump-shaped, button-shaped and channelled decorations added to the surface before the vessel was fired.

In Early Iron Age pottery literature, the terms *buckelkeramik* or *knobbed ware* are used for vessels with relief decoration on the surface. Whether this relief is pointed and long, resembling a horn, point-shaped or almond-shaped, it is described by the German word *buckel* or the English word *knobbed*. However, it is problematic to identify large horn-shaped protrusions and small dot-shaped or almond-shaped bumps on the vessel surface as separate decorative applications within the same nomenclature.

Horn-shaped semi-plastic ornamentation is a typical and widespread form of decoration for the Early Iron Age in other parts of the Balkans, but is represented by few examples in Turkish Thrace. Nevertheless, the dot or almond-shaped small lump ornamentation usually found on the shoulder of the vessel and the horizontal channelled ornamentation more common on the neck of the vessel are frequently encountered especially on the "Transition Phase" ceramics, which constitute the first chronological phase of the Early Iron Age in Thrace (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11. Examples of vessels with channelled decoration on the neck.

The decorations made using the scraping technique with the help of a tool before the vessel is fired include *Zigzag Sequence*, *Inverted 'V' Motif*, *Inverted Scalloped Triangle*, *Bevelled Scanning Frieze*, *Inverted Scalloped Frieze*, *Notch Scratch Sequence*, *Nail Scratch Sequence*, *Butterfly Motif*, *Lozenge*, *Inverted Spiral Circle*<sup>15</sup> (Tab. 6).

In the Printing Technique, which is applied on the surface of the vessel with the help of various tools or by finger pressing, with relief (positive) or carved (negative) moulds prepared in advance before drying, *single concentric*, *concentric concentric circle in a series*, *wave motif consisting of uninterrupted 'S' sequences*<sup>16</sup>, *Bidirectional Spiral Array*, *Hook-shaped "S" Array*, *Bevelled 'S' Array*, *Dot Array*, *Pit Dot Array*, *Pit Printed Checkerboard*, *Pit Triangle Arrays*, *Thorn Arrays*, *Rope Printed Thin Rope*, *Chevron*, *Schematic Bird motifs* were determined (Tab. 7).

The printing technique appears in the ceramic decoration technology of the Thracian region during Phases I and II of the Early Iron Age. Especially at Ada Tepe and Gluhite Kamani, two important centres in the Rhodope Mountains, the dating based on C14 analyses suggests that this technique was introduced in the last decade of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>17</sup>. The technique became widespread in the region from the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> The *Inward Spiralling Circle motif*, which was defined as a printing technique motif in my thesis, is revised in this article and treated as an ornamental element of the engraving technique.

<sup>16</sup> The *Wave Motif*, which was defined as an engraving technique motif in my thesis, has been revised in this article and handled as an ornamental element of the printing technique.

<sup>17</sup> Nekhrizov, Tzvetkova 2018, 22, 25.

<sup>18</sup> Ailincăi 2020, 463.

In addition, the *Finger Printed Rope Strings* seen on the rim and neck of many storage vessels can be considered as an ornamental element of this technique.

The Painting Technique, which is performed using the liquid obtained by diluting the slip applied on the surface of the jar, is represented by only two examples in the region. One of these vessels, both of which can be dated to the last phases of the period, is a vase with inventory number 2009/ 74 preserved in the Kırklareli Museum as a find from Aşağıpınar and a wheel-made vase fragment found during the excavations at Ainos (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12. Decorated ceramic examples in Slips Paint Technique: a. Inv. No: 2009/ 74/ Kırklareli Museum; b. Ainos Excavation Find.

### ANALOGIES AND CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

It is possible that many of the vessels found in the Tumulus of Taşlıcabayır, whose early phase dates to the "Transitional Phase" (12<sup>th</sup> century BC) represent the result of the cultural and commercial ties established in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC along the Central Europe – Transylvania and Southeastern Europe line, as reflected both in form and decoration. The connection with the northern/northwestern Balkans is particularly evident in the forms of S/M 1 and S/M 2 jugs<sup>19</sup>, K.1<sup>20</sup>, K.2<sup>21</sup>, K.9<sup>22</sup>, K. 13<sup>23</sup> mugs, and YK.

<sup>19</sup> Neugebauer *et alii* 1994, 165, Abb. 92; Bălan *et alii* 2016, pl. 3/12-13, 23, 24, 87-88; Berciu 1967, 59, Fig. 17/1; Leshtakov 2015, 65, Abb. 22/9; Bulatović, Filipović, 2017, fig. 5; Hristova 2018, Fig. 2/4-5; Leshtakov 2009, fig. 9; Hristova 2011, fig. 4/1-2; Nenova 2019, fig. 25

<sup>20</sup> Neugebauer *et alii* 1994, abb. 92; Puskás 2015, pl. 16/1; Micea, Florecu 1980; Bălan *et alii* 2016, pl. III.

<sup>21</sup> Ljuština, Dmitrović 2015, 41, fig. 13; Puskás 2015, fig. 4, pl. 2/3, pl. 9/5; Bălan *et alii* 2016, pl. III/83; Niculiță *et alii* 2016, 315, fig. 20/4-6

<sup>22</sup> Berciu 1967, 124, 125, fig. 58/4

<sup>124</sup>, YK. 225 dinner vessels. Considering that each of these forms has parallels in the Thracian Region and its immediate surroundings during the Early Iron Age, it could be hypothesised that the northern/northwestern Balkan culture made a significant contribution to the Early Iron Age culture of Thrace in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.

Nevertheless, the vessel representing S/M. 3 type jugs and recorded in the Edirne Museum records under inventory number 1347 as a find from Taşlıcabayır Tumulus exhibits a more regional characteristic. Its closest parallel is found at Gluhite Kamani<sup>26</sup> and its form has been known in the Thracian region since the Late Bronze Age<sup>27</sup>. The fact that this jug form was found in the Early Iron Age only at Taşlıcabayır at the foot of the Strandz Mountains and at the Gluhite Kamani Sanctuary in the Rhodope Mountains, which are belong to the same cultural area, suggests that this form was created in Eastern Thrace.

Similarly, among the earliest examples of the ÇKK. 1 drinking vessel form are the kantharos-type vessels from the Valchitran Treasure in Bulgaria, dating to the Late Bronze Age<sup>28</sup>. It is possible to say that this form emerged from the internal dynamics of the Thracian Region and spread in the Eastern Thrace and Pšeničevo cultural regions during the transition to the Early Iron Age.

The S/M.8 type jugs and the K. 7 and K.12 type mugs seem to continue some of the pottery traditions of the Middle or Late Bronze Age in various parts of the Thracian Region. In fact, it is possible to define the S/M.3 type jug form and the K.4 and K.8 type mugs, whose parallels are found only in a narrow area in the eastern part of Thrace, under the heading of "Eastern Thracian Type" vessels.

In the same time, the S/M.2 and S/M.3 types represented by the finds from Taşlıcabayır Tumulus and the S/M.4 type jugs represented by the Arpalık Dolmen find with inventory number 2669 were spread as far as Troy<sup>29</sup>. This situation is extremely important as it shows the Anatolian connection during the Eastern Thracian Early Iron Age Transitional Phase.

Other ceramic data shedding light on the relationship between Eastern Thrace and Anatolia during the Early Iron Age include BAH. 24 from Bahçeli in the Maritsa Valley,

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<sup>23</sup> Bălan *et alii* 2016, pl. III/77; Krauß 2018, fig. 2/3; Hristova 2018, fig. 1/ 2,6,7; Nenova 2019, fig. 10/2, pl. 28; Leshtakov 2009, fig. 8

<sup>24</sup> Bălan *et alii* 2016, pl. II/47, Pl. III/37; Nenova 2018, 203, 164, pl. 14/a; Sava 2019, pl. 4/9.

<sup>25</sup> Ilon 2015, Taf. 14/3; Kacsó 2012, Pl. 1/1; Leshtakov 2015, 72, Abb. 28/1; Neugebauer *et alii* 1994, Abb. 25/14; Prendi 1995, Taf. 2/2, 5/9; Sava 2019, 111, pl. 11/19.

<sup>26</sup> Nekhrizov, Tzvetkova 2018, fig. 6/10.

<sup>27</sup> Horejs 2007, taf. 125-127; Hristova 2018, fig. 5/5.

<sup>28</sup> Penkova, Meofher 2018; Venedikov, Gerassimov 1975, 7, 17, 27 sqq.; Nenova 2018, 107.

<sup>29</sup> Leshtakov 2009, Fig. 12; Hnila 2012, pl. 199/715.



GS. 5 from Gölsirtı in the Tunca Valley, and AT. 3 from Adatepe in the upper part of the Tunca Valley. The closest analogue of this type of ornamentation is found in the Babadag culture<sup>30</sup> and in Troy layer VIIb<sub>1</sub><sup>31</sup>. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that this type of rope ornamentation, which is not very common, was also found in the Early Iron Age levels of İnönü Cave in the Black Sea Region of Anatolia<sup>32</sup>. The zigzag motif with a series of dots, which we call the "Transitional Phase" from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age, is almost identical to the zigzag motif seen on the cup found at Taşlıcabayır and exhibited in the Edirne Museum under inventory number 1349<sup>33</sup>.

It is possible to find parallels for some of the forms and decorative features we have identified in the Early Iron Age ceramics of Eastern Thrace in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions outside Anatolia.

The YK. 2 type dinner vessels find parallels not only in the Balkan region but also in the handmade burnished "Barbarian Ceramics" extending from continental Greece to Cyprus. Among the handmade burnished coarse-paste vessel groups (HBW) recovered from the GH IIIB levels of important Mycenaean cities such as Tiryns and Mykenai and the LH IIIC level at Dimini, there are very close analogues of YK. 2b type vessels<sup>34</sup>. The same type of vessel forms from Kastanas<sup>35</sup> in northern Greece can be considered as an intermediate link in a cultural migration from Eastern Thrace to continental Greece. Although the easy-to-produce, non-specific nature of the vessel form makes it difficult to establish a cultural communication link through similarity of form, the occurrence of examples of YK. 2 type in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age settlements in the south, where ceramic elements of Balkan origin are widespread, draws attention to some extent. In fact, it is noteworthy in this context that the close form of the bowl from Taşlıcabayır, which represents the YK. 2b type, was also found in Cyprus<sup>36</sup> during the same period. Similarly, the handmade, burnished, rough ceramics (HBW) found in some centres in continental Greece are reminiscent of the form of S/M. 2 type jugs in terms of their profile characteristics<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Ailincăi 2011, fig. 11/II.

<sup>31</sup> Hnla 2012, Kat. Nr: 103-104.

<sup>32</sup> Ekmen *et alii* 2020, fig. 13.

<sup>33</sup> Ekmen *et alii* 2021, fig. 10.

<sup>34</sup> Romanos 2011, 18, 20.

<sup>35</sup> Pilides 1991, fig. 37.

<sup>36</sup> Pilides 1991, fig. 50.

<sup>37</sup> Pilides 1991, fig. 3, 4/M10, 7/9-10.

## CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

The sherds from Turkish Thrace, most of which are out of context, can only be classified based on their form and decoration. The identification and dating attempts made using the typology have shown that a significant portion of the ceramics from Eastern Thrace, especially in the "Transitional Phase" of the Early Iron Age, are related to the cultures in the northern and north-western Balkans. The pottery tradition traced back to the Middle and Late Bronze Age in the northern and north-western Balkans seems to have had a significant influence on the creation of the Early Iron Age ceramics of Eastern Thrace by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.

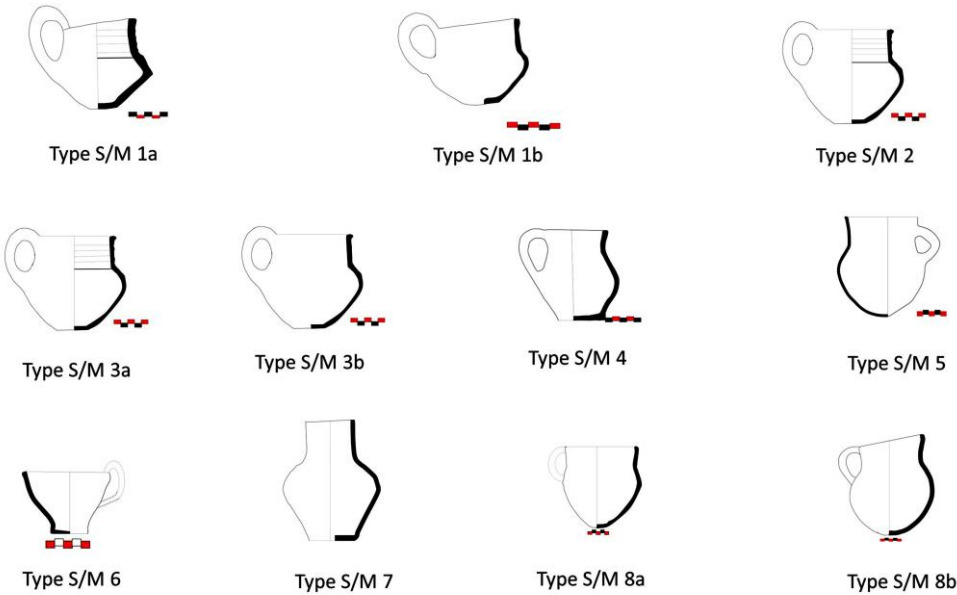
Nevertheless, the Thracian region, with its own dynamics, carried some strong elements of the tradition produced during the Bronze Age into the Early Iron Age. It is clear that many vessel forms had a direct or indirect influence on Eastern Thrace via Bulgaria. As an example, the excavations of the Tashlıcabayır Tumulus and the excavations of the Dren-Delyan cemetery area brought to light vessels of the same type from almost two different ends of the Thracian Region. This observation, together with the fact that there is a close similarity of context of these finds, is important for showing the extent of the spread of the culture within the region.

In the Early Iron Age, the cultures of Turkish Thrace, both in the Transitional Phase and during Phases I and II, exhibit common traits with the Pšeničevo and Babadag cultural environments. In some cases, vessel forms and decorations show features that are restricted to the eastern part of Thrace, thus strengthening the idea of local production. Some of the vessels found at Taşlıcabayır, in particular, provide evidence for the existence of this local production dynamic.

All these suggestions reveal that the cultural dynamics of the Early Iron Age in Eastern Thrace was very vibrant, both in terms of its openness to other parts of the Balkans and its local strength.

Considering the influence of the ceramic culture of the region on Anatolia to the south, Eastern Thrace can be considered as a transit route for cultural migrations from the Balkans to Anatolia and the Aegean in the Early Iron Age, especially during the "Transition Phase".

It is difficult to establish a definite link between the region and the "Barbarian Ceramic" culture of the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean. It is important and remarkable that some of the forms and decorative elements found in Turkish Thrace have parallels in some settlements in the western Aegean and eastern Mediterranean. Undoubtedly, it is very difficult to establish a cultural connection between these regions based only on pottery analogies. However, while analysing the ethno-cultural mobility in all these spaces, especially during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC, the possible influence of Eastern Thrace on its neighbouring regions should also be taken into consideration.



Tab. 1. Types of Jugs.

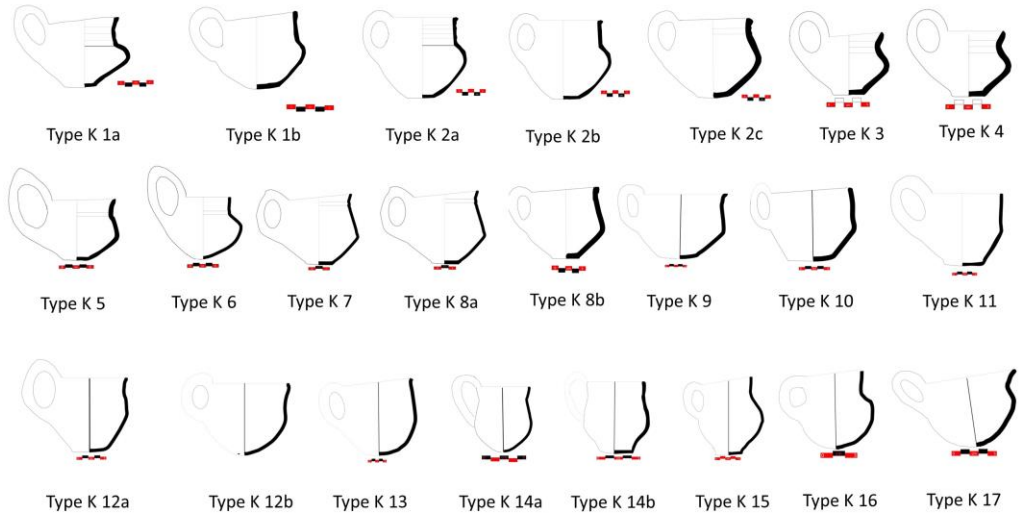


Table. 2. Types of Cups.

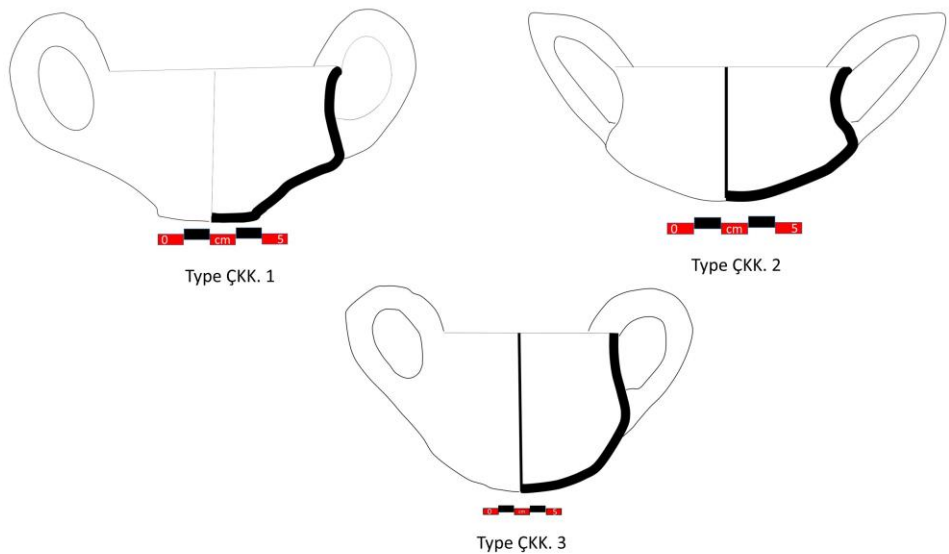


Table 3. Types of Double Handle Mug.

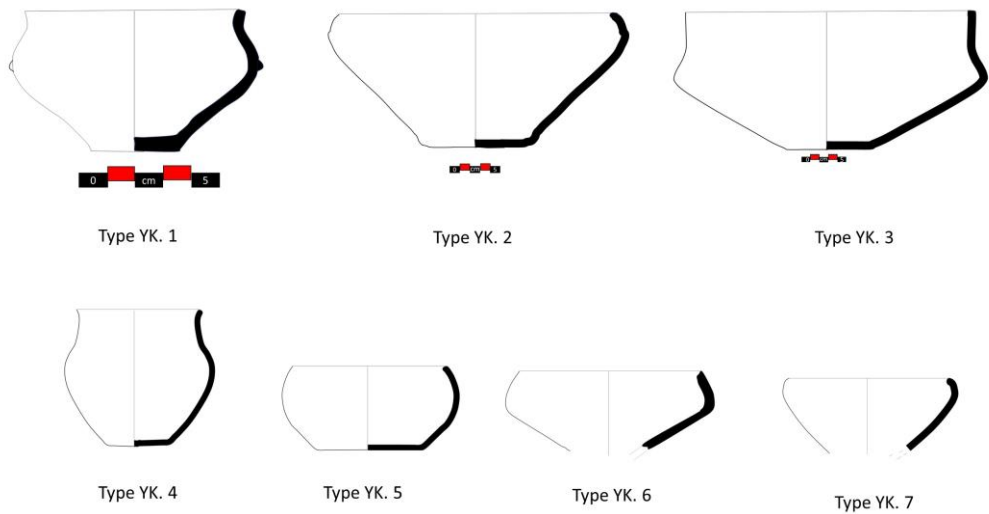


Table 4. Types of Food Container.

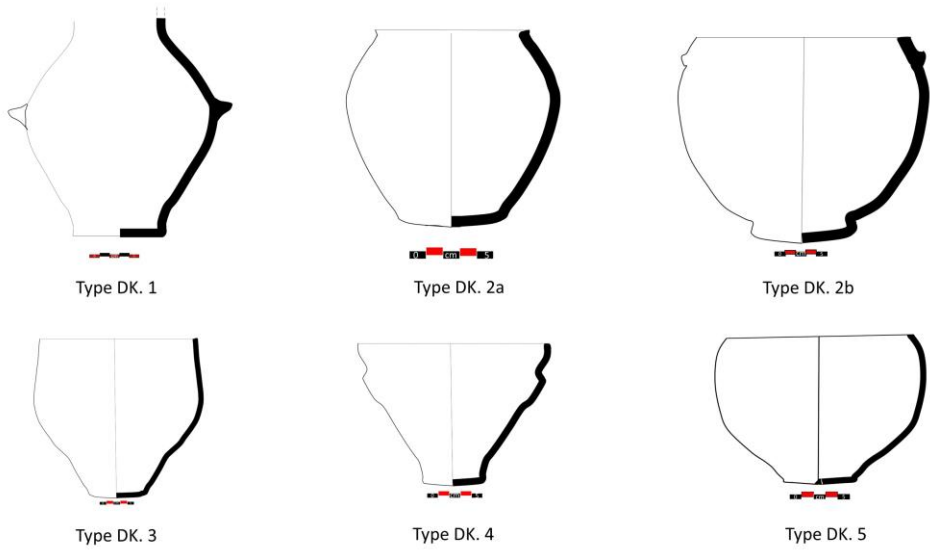


Table 5. Types of Storage Container.

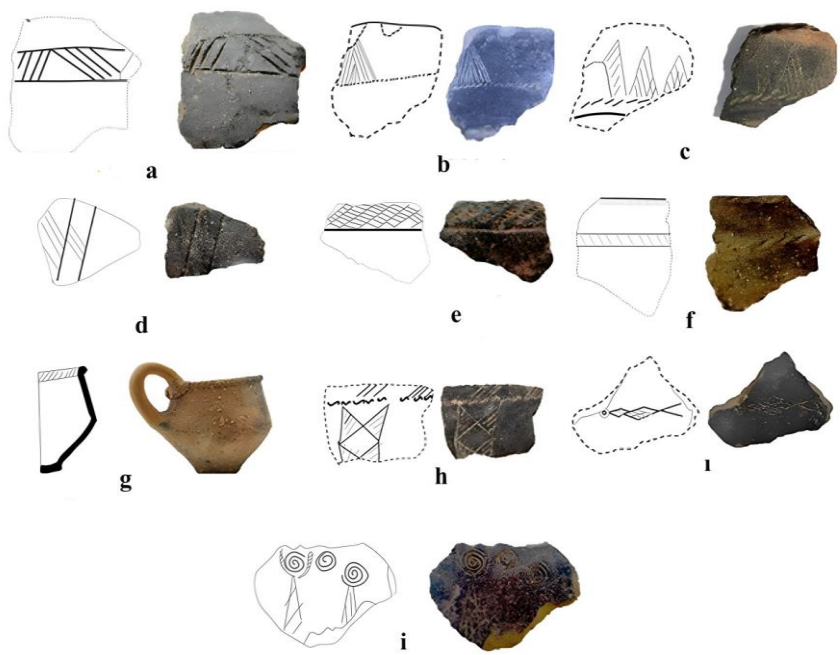


Table 6. Engraving Technique Motifs.

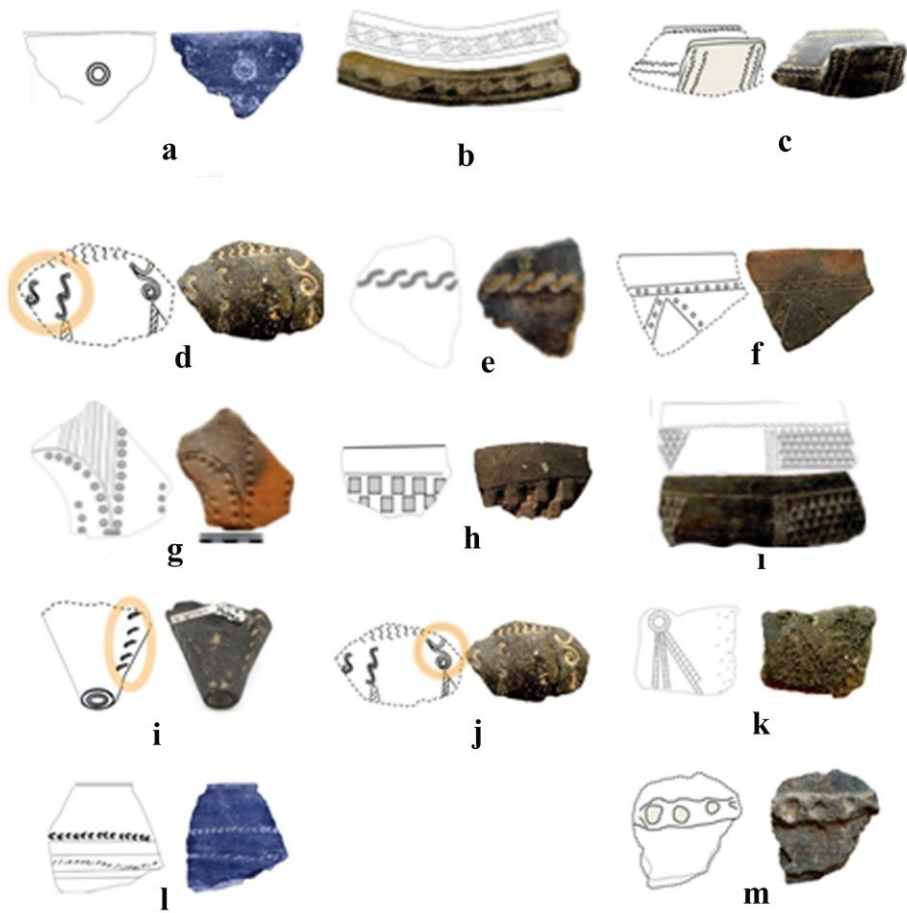


Table 7. Stamped decoration.

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